

# Foreign Policy Decisions: New Zealand Involvement in East Timor 2000–2002

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# Contents

<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>5</b>
Allison and the study of foreign policy decision-making	6
The East Timor case study	13
Methodology for this study	16
Allison's models	19
Critical responses to Allison's models: a literature survey	38
Using Allison's approach for a New Zealand case study	54
Conclusions	59
 <b>CHAPTER TWO: NEW ZEALAND INVOLVEMENT IN EAST TIMOR USING A RATIONAL ACTOR MODEL</b>	 <b>60</b>
States as unitary actors	61
The 'problem' of East Timor	63
The national interests at stake	65
Government decisions explained using a rational actor model	74
Allison's Model I proposition tested	83
Conclusions	83
 <b>CHAPTER THREE : NEW ZEALAND'S INVOLVEMENT IN EAST TIMOR USING AN ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR MODEL</b>	 <b>85</b>
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	86
Official Development Assistance	99
The New Zealand Defence Force	107
New Zealand Police	115
The New Zealand Customs Service, the Department of Corrections, The Department for Courts	120
Coordination Mechanisms across the New Zealand Government	124
Allison's Model II propositions tested	126
Conclusions	129

<b>CHAPTER FOUR : NEW ZEALAND’S INVOLVEMENT IN EAST TIMOR USING A GOVERNMENTAL POLITICS MODEL</b>	<b>131</b>
The Players	132
The Structure of the Game	143
Government decisions explained using a governmental politics model	146
Allison’s Model III propositions tested	163
Conclusions	169
<b>CHAPTER FIVE : CONCLUSION:</b>	<b>170</b>
The usefulness of Allison’s Models as decision-making theory	170
The usefulness of Allison’s models for this case study	176
Should Allison’s models be used for future studies?	182
Implications for policy-makers	189
Conclusions	194
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>195</b>

# Chapter One: Introduction and Methodology

This thesis sets out to examine how New Zealand foreign policy decisions were made with respect to the peacekeeping and peace support intervention in East Timor<sup>1</sup> from 2000 to 2002. Examining this intervention requires an attention to theoretical models for explaining foreign policy decision making, an understanding of complex peace support operations and how they work and how the New Zealand government decision-making system operates in particular. The thesis aims to assess whether the popular theoretical models for explaining foreign policy decisions developed by Graham Allison help explain the decisions of a small country's participation in a regional and peace support multinational operation, and whether they help predict future decisions.

The framework used for examining foreign policy decision-making is Graham Allison's influential work *The Essence of Decision*, which was first published in 1971, and revised and reissued in 1999 (Allison 1971; Allison and Zelikow 1999). Allison's work examined the case study of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, which was considered "the defining moment of the nuclear age" (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 11). It offered three different models for explaining how the decisions were taken, which Allison hoped would make explicit the conceptual models used by professional analysts of foreign affairs, policy makers and ordinary citizens when they think about problems of foreign and military policy. Allison argued that the "largely implicit conceptual models [currently used] have significant consequences for the content of their thought" (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 3).

This first chapter of this thesis explains the centrality of Allison's work in the modern study of foreign policy decision making, and why his models have therefore been used as the basis for this thesis. It will discuss whether Allison's models function as

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<sup>1</sup>A note on nomenclature: the country referred to in this thesis as East Timor officially changed its name to Timor-Leste upon independence in May 2002. Because for the majority of the time period covered by this thesis—2000-2002, it was a territory under UN mandate, and was known as East Timor, we have chosen to use this name within this text. However when referring to events in that country in later years (e.g. the violence in 2006) we use the name Timor-Leste. We note that official documents of that country and references to it do not use the hyphen consistently.

international relations “theory”. It will then describe Allison’s three models in some detail, before going on to examine some of the ways in which they have been critiqued. Finally the first chapter will then go on to discuss some of the advantages and constraints of these models for analysis of a small country’s foreign policy in a complex peacekeeping context. The subsequent chapters of this thesis take each of Allison’s three paradigms in turn and ‘test’ whether evidence for or against them is apparent from the case study. The conclusion then returns to some of the critiques of Allison’s theories, and discusses whether these are applicable for the case study in question. The overall finding from this study is that on one hand, the three models do indeed offer some useful insights into decision making in the case study. They prove that “light can be shed on the same object from many angles at once” (Welch 1992:142). On the other hand, this thesis cannot conclude that any of these paradigms in itself is a straightforward or universal theory for decision making or that any particular model has unique predictive power for future scenarios. What they do not offer, as some commentators have lamented, is “successful theories that permit general causal inferences, provide cogent explanations and improve predictions” (Welch 1992: 116).

## ***Allison and the study of foreign policy decision-making***

Before discussing Allison’s models in detail, it is important to outline how the study of decision-making fits within the field of the study of foreign policy. The decision making approach to the study of foreign policy was developed in the 1950s and 1960s, with scholars seeking to find a conceptual framework and identifiable variables to test decision scenarios and predict outcomes. Proponents sought to highlight the importance of the internal setting for decision making, social structure and behaviour within a state as well as the decision-making process (Snyder, Bruck et al. 1962; Braybrooke and Lindblom 1963; Rosenau 1967). Some scholars focused on the range of problems or issues which decision-makers must handle (Rosenau 1966; Rosenau 1967), while others looked at variables related to decision makers themselves (Hermann 1978). The approach sought to be positivist science; that is, it aspired to suggest logical propositions which could then be

tested by empirical observation of reality.<sup>2</sup> In one example, a scholar sought to take all the variables identified in Snyder, Bruck and Sapin's model and test these in the case of the United States' decision to enter the Korean war (Paige 1968)<sup>3</sup>. Despite the important advances it had made, the decision-making approach was criticized in the 1970s for overly narrowing the number of variables studied in order to show clear relationships between variables and outcomes. As one critic noted "this lack of comprehensiveness...resulted in an oversimplification of policy-making behaviour" (Rosati 1981: 239 n 9).

Another theme in the American political science literature of the 1950s and 1960s was a focus on bureaucracies and the split (what Allison calls 'fractionated') nature of presidential power. Richard Neustadt is most often associated with the focus on bargaining at the intra-governmental level, although Samuel P. Huntington, Warner Schilling, Charles Lindblom and Roger Hilsman also studied these aspects. These scholars sought less to develop schema whereby decisions could be predicted, but rather, they highlighted the complexities of power in the real world.

Allison's 1971 *Essence of Decision* (Allison 1971) and Morton Halperin's 1974 *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Halperin 1974) are the two works most often associated with the establishment of the school of "bureaucratic politics" in the 1970s, which focused both on decision-making processes and on bargaining within the bureaucracy and government. Allison's work importantly aimed to combine both an

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<sup>2</sup> Positivism is most often associated with nineteenth century writer Auguste Comte, regarded as the first sociologist. By the 1950s, the "received view" of positivism was that science could be presented as a product, that is, as linguistic or numerical statements. Positivists held that these should demonstrate logical structure and coherence and should be testable; i.e. verified, confirmed or falsified by the empirical observation of reality. Positivism considered such science cumulative, largely trans-cultural, and not related to the personality or social position of the investigator. See Hacking, I., Ed. (1981). Scientific Revolutions. New York, Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> In the introduction to Glenn Paige's 1968 book, Richard C. Snyder praises Paige's illustration of "the operations which are entailed by *a priori* and *post hoc* analysis, by the connection between narration and theory and by the search for an empirically base, parsimonious explanation for the United States response to the invasion of Korea. These operations would seem to be the a) identification of variables (b) weighting of the variables and (c) the interrelation of the variables" Snyder goes on to say that recent literature "shows definite progress in narrowing the range of significant variables, greater precision in conceptualization and explicit formulation of hypotheses stating inter-variable relationships." Paige, G. D. (1968). The Korean Decision : June 24-30, 1950 New York, The Free Press.

understanding of the complexities of real power and the positivist predictive approach of the decision-making theorists. Bureaucratic politics has remained popular as a way of explaining governmental decisions, although as this study highlights, these early models have not always met the early high expectations of theoretical rigour and predictive power held for them by their proponents (see for example Bendor and Hammond 1992; Welch 1992; Welch 1998; Bernstein 2000).

Within the study of decision-making, the work of Graham T. Allison stands as both a seminal formulation of the bureaucratic politics approach, and remains a popular explanatory tool in most if not all of the general texts on international relations. (We expand on this point later in this chapter.) Allison, a Harvard-educated historian, was fascinated with the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, and in 1968 produced a doctoral thesis in political science explaining the decision making processes behind the event: “Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis”. In 1970 Allison became professor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and in 1971, this thesis, reworked, appeared as *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*<sup>4</sup>.

In *The Essence of Decision* Allison asks three basic questions about the Cuban missile crisis: Why did the Soviet Union send missiles to Cuba? Why did the USA impose a blockade? Why did the Soviet Union remove the missiles? Allison then

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<sup>4</sup> The title was taken from John F Kennedy’s foreword to Theodore C. Sorenson’s 1963 study “Decision-Making in the White House”, where Kennedy wrote:

The American Presidency ... is formidable because it represents the point of ultimate decision in the American political system. It is exposed because decision cannot take place in a vacuum: the Presidency is the center of the play of pressure, interest, and idea in the Nation; and the presidential office is the vortex into which all the elements of national decision are irresistibly drawn. And it is mysterious because the essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer--often, indeed, to the decider himself.

Yet, if the process of presidential decision is obscure, the necessity for it is all too plain. ... we cannot escape choice; ... A President must choose among men, among measures, among methods. His choice helps determine the issues of his Presidency, their priority in the national life, and the mode and success of their execution. The heart of the Presidency is therefore informed, prudent, and resolute choice--and the secret of the presidential enterprise is to be found in an examination of the way presidential choices are made.



analyses the crisis from three competing points of view. His first paradigm is the rational actor model which assumes that states are unitary actors that make rational decisions based on an assessment of what is in their national interests, and the likely consequences of those decisions. Allison's second model is called organisational behaviour; this model conceives of decisions as the logical output of different pre-existing bureaucracies, processes and protocols, developed over time. Decisions are not based on an assessment of the specific consequences at the moment of deciding, but on a "logic of appropriateness", whereby institutions recommend action based on past experience and their own capacity to be involved. Modes of behaviour are basically pre-determined and predictable, especially the more the analyst knows the history, structure and culture of the institutions involved. The third model, and the one for which Allison's is most well known, is called governmental politics. This model sees decisions as the result of political games and bargains within governments, creating a collage of decisions rather than a unified coherent strategy. The games and bargaining occur as options are formed, in the decisions themselves and in implementation.

*The Essence of Decision* was widely reviewed and was an instant success, and can be argued to have been one of the most influential works on political decision making written in the 1970s. According to one reviewer, it "helped spawn the public policy discipline by laying the foundations for a new series of analytical approaches to understanding the behaviour of governments and other institutions" (Marks 2000:1). The dust jacket for the 1999 edition claims the 1971 text was "a classic work that has influenced generations of students, scholars, and policy makers" (Allison and Zelikow 1999). Having sold more than 250,000 copies (Marks 2000), Allison's work has been used far beyond its original field. For example, the 1971 text has been cited in the *Social Sciences Citation Index*, in publications as diverse as *The American Journal of Agricultural Economics* and the *Journal of Nursing Administration* (Welch 1992: 112). It has remained a standard text for the Kennedy School of Government's public policy courses (Marks 2000).

In the reviews that came out at the time of its publication scholars heralded it as a new breakthrough in the understanding of government decision (Holsti 1972; Rourke 1972; Wagner 1974). Holsti, for example, called it "the most generally persuasive

attempt ever made to show the relevance of theorizing to the treatment of what are ordinarily thought to be the main problems in the study of international politics” (Holsti 1972: 446). Although Allison’s paradigms were not without their critics both at the time they were first published and later on (Krasner 1972; Steele 1972; Art 1973; Ball 1974; Wagner 1974; Steiner 1977; Bendor and Hammond 1992; Welch 1992; Welch 1998; Bernstein 2000) nevertheless they remain the starting point for discussion of decision-making theory and bureaucratic politics.<sup>5</sup>

Allison published a second edition of *The Essence of Decision* in 1999, co-authored by historian Philip Zelikow. In this later edition, some attempt is made to address earlier criticisms, as well as incorporate more modern foreign policy examples to illustrate the three models.<sup>6</sup>

It is the widespread use of Allison’s models in the discipline that has prompted their use for this thesis. When theories of how foreign policy decisions are made are discussed in general terms, Allison’s framework forms the basis for the explanation of decision-making in many if not most of the standard general texts on international relations (see for example Russett and Starr 1992; Evans and Newnham 1998; Griffiths and O’Callaghan 2002; Mingst 2003; Baylis and Smith 2005; Goldstein 2005). This is not accidental, as Allison’s models are generally agreed to provide a useful way to ‘deconstruct’ assumptions of state rationality, and to allow scholars and students to think about decision making in new ways. Nevertheless, scholars who have sought to rigorously test the models have found them wanting, at least against the criteria Allison sets for himself, which is of positivist political science that would allow predictions to be made (Bendor and Hammond 1992; Welch 1992). Later in the chapter the criticisms of the 1971 text are outlined, along with some criticisms of the 1999 revision. The study

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<sup>5</sup> Indeed, David A. Welch, a critic who has outlined problems with Allison’s models, nevertheless acknowledges the centrality of Allison’s work to the field, saying that “The term ‘bureaucratic politics paradigm’ is a little confusing because it conjures up thoughts of Allison’s particular seminal formulation that was fraught with errors, gaps and superfluities”. Welch, D. A. (1998). "A Positive Science of Bureaucratic Politics." *Mershon International Studies Review* 42(2): 210-216.

<sup>6</sup> References to Allison’s work in this thesis are to the 1999 edition. The 1999 edition keeps Allison’s models basically unchanged but adds more explanations about them in the beginning of each chapter. In general, the models are attributed to Allison alone but where updated thinking since 1971 is added, they are attributed to both authors.

also considers the usefulness as well as limitations of applying Allison's model to a study of New Zealand foreign policy in general, and to the case study in question. The rather lengthy discussion of the criticisms that have been levelled at Allison's text should not be read as suggesting the models are without value. Rather, the thesis attempts to evaluate the usefulness of a well-used framework for analysis, both from a theoretical and practical point of view. While the theoretical analysis might suggest the models are rather less useful than they first appear, the practical analysis shows that they do nevertheless allow the analyst a range of insights that a 'default' rational actor analysis might not consider. The conclusion suggests that an analysis using these models provides several important practical lessons for policy makers.

A discussion of theoretical models for foreign policy decision-making must, at least at the outset, address the question of whether there is any substantive difference between foreign policy decisions and other government decisions. Are foreign policy decisions special? While it is not the purpose of this thesis to make a comparison of these two categories of decision-making, such a study would no doubt be insightful. Nevertheless, a few comments can be made. At the outset, it is important to note that Allison argues that his three model approach can be applied to any public policy setting

*The Rational Actor, Organizational Behavior and Governmental Politics models can be applied beyond foreign policy to the domestic policy of national governments, state and local governments, non-governmental organizations like the United Nations or Red Cross, schools, universities, business enterprises; and other aggregate actors whom one encounters in normal, everyday life (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 7).*

Nevertheless, it can be argued that Allison's deconstruction of decision-making process is much less challenging, and less radical, to domestic decision analysis, because the bureaucratic and political processes he describes are taken for granted, and there is no universal assumption of the state as a unitary rational actor. For foreign policy, on the other hand, the assumption of the state as a unitary rational actor is pervasive, since it functions as a necessary shorthand when discussing interaction between states. Indeed, it would be cumbersome and unwieldy to discuss international relations if every issue needed to be broken down into the multiple positions taken by the various interest groups within each state, as well as the various positions taken by all other groups in all other

states. Obviously, a similar reductionism also takes place in analysis of domestic policy when key stakeholder groups are also ‘reduced’ to unitary actors even when in reality they might have multiple or changing views, but the difference is in the level of analysis at which such reductionism is applied, and the degree to which it is explicitly and self-consciously acknowledged by those doing the analysis.

That the state is, and should be seen to act as, a unitary rational actor on foreign policy matters is a position frequently taken on board by decision-makers themselves. The phrase “politics stops at the water’s edge”, attributed to Senator Arthur Vardenburg, is common in American political discourse<sup>7</sup>. The perceived need to have a bipartisan foreign policy is perhaps stronger in small states which struggle to command international attention. The New Zealand National Party, for example, has recently been arguing that “the basis for an enduring consensus on our foreign, defence and trade policies is coming into view. It now requires political leadership to put it into place” (McCully, Mapp et al. 2007). The state as unitary rational actor is thus not only assumed as an operating concept, but also perceived to be a desirable end state.

It also can be observed that the tendency to reduce complex decision-making processes to those of a unitary actor increases as time passes. For example, when a domestic decision is discussed in the popular press—e.g. whether to fund a breast cancer drug, or to build a stadium, or to eliminate parents’ right to hit their children as discipline—sometimes the analyst treats the government as unitary and rational, but more often, analysis emphasises different interest groups, personalities, timeframes and political and electoral agendas. With the passage of time, it might become common to read more unitary statements—e.g. “the Government decided to fund the drug/ build the stadium/outlaw smacking”.

It is worth noting that bureaucratic politics’ advocates have suggested that the difference between foreign and domestic policy making has narrowed after the end of the

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<sup>7</sup> The phrase is usually attributed to US Republican Senator and advocate of bipartisan foreign policy, Arthur H. Vardenburg, who used it in 1950, but the phrase, and the thinking behind it, had been in common use for many years before that. For example, Theodore Roosevelt is quoted as saying, in 1907 “our party lines stop at the water’s edge” Safire, W. (2006). *On Language: From the slippery slope to the jaws of defeat*. International Herald Tribune.

Cold War, and continues to narrow. Even in 1976, Allison and Szanton argued that “‘foreign’ policy has almost disappeared as a distinct and specialized realm... interdependence has thrust foreign policy into domestic politics” (Allison and Szanton 1976: x). In 2006 Halperin and Clapp argued the trend had continued, pointing to “the realignment of power, alliances and ideology...[and] in how technological advances have transformed the way we communicate and conduct business, both nationally and internationally”. They also note the expanding role of Congress in foreign policy, the new importance of humanitarian values across both foreign and domestic policy (compared to Cold War *realpolitik* which allowed anything to pass under the guise of combating communism), the proliferation of essentially domestic government agencies which have developed international concerns, the rise of new government agencies and the importance of nongovernmental organisations (Halperin and Clapp 2006: vii–viii).

Although some actors do try to “leave politics at the water’s edge”, in general, the difference between foreign and domestic policy decisions is less about how the decisions get made, and more about how they get analysed. Assumption of the state as a single rational actor, both as part of the standard shorthand of international relations, and following the passage of time, remains prevalent; Halperin calls this “the analogy of international politics as two individuals talking clearly and purposefully to each other and reacting in terms of carefully calculated interests” (Halperin and Clapp 2006: 361). The deconstruction of these assumptions is how Allison’s models demonstrate their strength and usefulness.<sup>8</sup> This study’s conclusion, though, returns to the question of the ‘special’ nature of foreign policy decision-making, to discuss whether the rational actor model, qualified by an acceptance of ‘bounded rationality’, does indeed have advantages.

## ***The East Timor case study***

Before embarking on this study, it is important to explain why the East Timor case study was chosen. This case study permits the confluence of two research themes: a study of the evolution of complex, integrated peacekeeping and the study of how government

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<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Halperin credits Allison with “presenting persuasive evidence of the extent to which this is the dominant way of thinking about international politics”. Halperin, M. H. and P. Clapp (2006). Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy: Second Edition. Washington DC, Brookings Institute Press.

decisions are made in practice. Examining one small country's actual decision making processes with regards to a peacekeeping mission, this thesis seeks to 'go behind' some of the more general assumptions that form much of the analysis of peacekeeping. Seldom do analysts of peacekeeping missions seek to disaggregate decisions by examining the influence of the various different countries on the multinational decision making process, and they almost never look at different influences within each country. Making the assumption of a unitary rational actor is a useful and arguably necessary tool to manage the volumes of variables involved in analysis of foreign policy decisions, but it can also allow analysts to draw misleading conclusions about the way decisions were made in the past, and an unhelpful or unrealistic 'lesson learned' for the ways decisions should be made in the future. Assumptions of the single rational actor can also create misleading expectations of partner countries, especially in post conflict situations such as, for example, Timor-Leste or Iraq, where formal decision making structures which might be able to eventually generate a single national position, do not, for now, exist, or if they do exist, are fragile and immature. Western powers' frustration with these countries inability to act in a unitary way in their own national interest may say as much about those powers' false assumptions about the nature of governmental decision-making.

This thesis covers just one case study, which is not uncommon is decision-making analysis.<sup>9</sup> Glenn Paige argues that the single case study can, as the poet Stanley Kunitz suggested, "crack the kernel of the particular in order to liberate the universal" (Paige 1968: 10). It can permit:

*(1) the assembling of an empirical basis from which theoretical proposition may be induced...(2) the provision of an empirical test of pre-existing propositions—possibly a crucial test where propositions of universal validity have been asserted, (3) the demonstration of the empirically possible, (4) the establishment of an empirical basis for creating a conceptual framework or typology, (5) testing the relevance of a pre-existing analytical scheme, (6) the provision of sufficient empirical detail to permit the exploration of alternative hypotheses, and (7) the*

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<sup>9</sup> Famous examples include Allison's study of the Cuban missile crisis, Halperin's exploration of the ABM treaty and Paige's examination of the US Korean war decision. Paige, G. D. (1968). The Korean Decision : June 24-30, 1950 New York, The Free Press. Allison, G. T. (1971). The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. Boston, Little Brown. Halperin, M. H. (1974). Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy. Washington DC, Brookings Institute.

*provision of empirical data so rich in detail as to permit the reintegration of fragmented disciplinary insights into a unified body of knowledge (Paige 1968:10).*

Paige does note that a single case study requires attention to the boundaries of the case, the level of case comparability sought—the extent to which the case method will permit replication and comparison; the representativeness of the case, and the adequacy of explanation: whether the hypothesis or competing hypotheses actually explain the case (Paige 1968: 11).

The East Timor case study in particular has been chosen for three reasons. First, the violence there can be argued to form part of a wider trend towards insecurity in the South West Pacific (the so-called “Arc of Instability”) which is the backdrop to New Zealand’s regional foreign policy and security policy in the first decade of this millennium (Dibb 2003). The security issues raised by the East Timor violence include conflict about sovereignty, nationalism, land and identity, as well as concerns about human rights abuses perpetuated by uniformed forces. These same themes are also reflected in different ways in studies of conflicts in Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Fiji in the 1990s and the new millennium, and they are similar themes which arose again in the renewed fighting in Timor-Leste in 2006. The case study was also chosen for its important role in the history of UN peacekeeping, as it represented a new high water mark in the evolution of complex, integrated peace support missions. This trend has continued in the two largest peace operations in which New Zealand has been involved subsequently (in Solomon Islands, and Afghanistan).

The case study also represents a turning point for the development of ‘whole of government’ foreign policy and security interventions<sup>10</sup>. After the smaller intervention in Bougainville in 1997, the East Timor engagement was the first multi-agency military, diplomatic and ODA effort in New Zealand’s direct neighbourhood. As such, it can be used to highlight the development of new decision making processes for engagement with complex international issues.

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<sup>10</sup> This term has gained wide currency in the New Zealand public service during the term of the fifth Labour-led government. It denotes decision making taken collectively between agencies rather than in departmental silos.

The case covers the period from the start of 2000 until the end of 2002. This time excludes, for the most part, the INTERFET operation, led by Australia, which intervened in East Timor following the violence of September 1999<sup>11</sup>. This exclusion is deliberate, as INTERFET has been well covered elsewhere by other analysts (see for example Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2001; Crawford and Harper 2001; Smith and Dee 2003). Moreover, INTERFET was for the most part a military operation, whereas this thesis seeks to explore decision making across the whole of government, and New Zealand's interaction with a complex peacekeeping operation.

Finally, this thesis is not examining crisis decision making, but rather, decision over a longer time period, which is a more realistic and typical scenario faced by decision makers on a daily basis. By excessive focus on a crisis period, analysts risk distorting their theoretical models: a point covered in Chapter One. Instead, we have chosen to look at New Zealand decisions on East Timor once the flames had died down and the 'CNN factor' had waned.

Given all the above, the case study of New Zealand decisions with regard to East Timor 2000–2002 addresses the concerns that Paige identified: it is defined closely enough to be manageable; it could be compared with other similar cases (e.g. New Zealand foreign policy decision making for another regional conflict such as Solomon Islands, or Australian foreign policy decision making for the same crisis period for East Timor); it is representative of New Zealand foreign policy decision; and it can be adequately explained by reference to the decision-making models which this thesis will employ. Moreover, it is important enough within the recent history of New Zealand foreign policy to warrant close attention.

## ***Methodology for this study***

Having explained why the case study was chosen, it becomes necessary to make some comment on the methodology for this thesis. In looking at the case study it has not been possible to provide a comprehensive analysis of all decisions from all angles. Instead, the

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<sup>11</sup> Mandated in October 1999, UNTAET, the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor was not really functioning as an integrated mission until early 2000 as key staff took time to arrive 'in theatre'. Instead, the INTERFET military mission had much de facto control.



analysis seeks to “illustrate” each of Allison’s models using examples from the primary material. This has some methodological disadvantages, as will be discussed further in Chapter One, as the study cannot claim to be weighing all the evidence for and against each interpretation in any empirically valid manner. However given the length of time and the large number of different decisions covered by the case study, it is the only manageable way to present and illustrate the different models. Readers will need to bear in mind, therefore, that the analysis does not claim to be positivist science in the strict sense of the term, but rather seeks to be a starting point for discussion about both the models and the case study.

This study is limited also by a necessary restriction of the primary research to a review of the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), supplemented by interviews with a range of leaders and officials from government agencies. While the review of the MFAT files was extensive and these archives do contain a good deal of information on the decision making process of MFAT itself and of other agencies, the information retained for archives necessarily reflects the importance accorded to it by MFAT officials. This bias is acknowledged, and there is scope for further research into the archives of other agencies to augment the examination of governmental decision in these complex, inter-agency matters. MFAT officials also archive documents in a manner that takes into account the Official Information Act (OIA), whereby papers are filed in the expectation that unless there is a specific and legally valid reason not to, they can be released into the public domain. While all formal paperwork such as submissions and Cabinet Papers will always be filed, officials routinely make judgments about whether to archive less formal documents such as emails, and whether to make a written record for file of conversations. Decision-making theories that emphasise personality and politicking, and the fast pace and fluid nature of decisions will always be harder to substantiate with written evidence.

Although some of the limitations of the written record can be offset by conducting interviews with key actors, the use of interviews as evidentiary material is not without its own complications. While this study involved structured interviews with a range of leaders and officials involved in foreign policy decision, there is no claim here to have interviewed absolutely all those involved. Interviewees can have imperfect memories,

especially for the mundane but important details of decision making process over a period of time—a point raised by all those interviewed—and thus some accounts differed or conflicted between different interviewees. Moreover, most interviewees also suggested that they had revised some of their views with the benefit of hindsight, so as with any historical study, it is seldom possible to get ‘real time’ views. (In addition some of those interviewed did not work on East Timor issues for the entire period of this thesis.) While there was no specific evidence of it found in this study, other commentators have noted that interviewees can offer self-serving accounts of historical events. It was observed, however, that many interviewees were somewhat cautious in their comments.

New Zealand is a small country and the personal and professional linkages between interviewees sometimes recommended circumspection, as did the fact that many civil servants have ongoing professional requirements to be judicious in what they say for public comment. Ministers who were interviewed for this study were happy to be quoted by name, but this was not the expectation for officials. Given the sensitivity of some aspects of these interviews, comments are not attributed to officials by name in the text. In some cases also where email communications are cited, the officials writing have not been named in the text, although names appear on the archive material.

Finally, it is important to note the absence of a dedicated literature review in this thesis. This is because, while bureaucratic politics is not a new approach, it has, for the most part, been used to study US foreign policy. Studies of the bureaucratic politics of decision in Commonwealth countries are more rare (see for example Nossal 1979; Nossal 1989; Michaud 2002). There does not appear to have been a study of New Zealand foreign policy decision in the period in question using Allison’s models, or indeed bureaucratic politics explicitly as a framework. In order to provide the secondary source background to this project then, the thesis addresses the literature related to bureaucratic politics, UN peacekeeping in general and UNTAET in particular and New Zealand’s involvement in East Timor in the first three chapters respectively, which establish the context for the case study. The detailed examination of the case study uses for the most part, primary source material. In the conclusion, the thesis returns to some of the literature to discuss the usefulness of Allison’s models in general and the applicability of them to this case study in particular.

In summary, then, the methodological issues that this study confronted were both a feature of the theory involved and the consequent challenge to demonstrate the validity of each of the models without allowing the theory to self-select the evidence, and at the same time, the usual methodological constraints of using archival evidence and subject interviews. The theoretical concerns will be discussed more fully later in this chapter. It is hoped that the case study will demonstrate both the possibilities as well as the limitations of the available historical evidence.

## **Allison's models**

The following section of this chapter aims to discuss Allison's models from a theoretical perspective. It first discusses whether or not they count as 'theory' in the first place, then explains the models in some detail, and then goes on to outline some of the critical analysis of them that has appeared in the literature.

One of Allison's critics, David A. Welch, examines closely whether *The Essence of Decision* qualifies as a decision-making theory. He notes that Allison "freely employs a variety of synonyms for the word 'paradigm' such as 'model', 'approach' 'perspective' 'frame of reference' 'framework' 'conceptual lens' and 'conceptual scheme'. These are useful synonyms for the less familiar term 'meta-theory'". Useful paradigms or meta-theory, Welch argues, "facilitate the development of successful theories that permit general causal inferences, provide cogent explanations and improve predictions" (Welch 1992: 115–16). It is Welch's contention that Allison's models fall short in this respect, but we shall return to this point later.

Allison himself uses Robert Merton's concept of the paradigm, saying that that a paradigm is "weaker than a theoretical model" but nevertheless offers "a systematic statement of the basic assumptions, concepts and propositions employed by a school of analysis" (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 60 n 20).<sup>12</sup> The usefulness of this circumscribed definition of the paradigm is that it does not make a claim for comprehensive explanatory power as a theoretical framework might. Rather, it allows different paradigms to be

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<sup>12</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary defines a paradigm as "a pattern, exemplar or example" while the Webster dictionary defines it as "a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws and generalisations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated".

evaluated, and unlike an all-encompassing theoretical framework, the analyst need not subscribe to one exclusively.

Having explained the concept of a paradigm, Allison suggests his three paradigms have the following component parts; Basic Unit of Analysis; Organizing Concepts; Dominant Inference Pattern; General Propositions; Evidence/methodology.

## **Model I: The Rational Actor Model**

This model has two simple components: the state is viewed as a unitary actor and the state is viewed as making rational decisions based on an analysis of consequences. The model is described, in its most simple form as “the attempt to explain international events by recounting the aims and calculations of nations or governments”. It interprets nation-state behaviour as a value-maximising choice. It assumes that “the actor is a national government... the action is chosen as a calculated solution to a strategic problem...[and] the explanation consists of showing what goal the government was pursuing when it acted and how the action was a reasonable choice, given the nation’s objective” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 13–15).

Allison and Zelikow argue that most contemporary international relations scholars implicitly or explicitly use this model. They locate the classical realists such as Morgenthau and Kissinger within this paradigm. Morgenthau in particular is explicit in his assumption of a rational actor model of state behaviour, saying “it provides for rational discipline in action and creates an astounding continuity in foreign policy, which makes American, British or Russian foreign policy appear as an intelligent, rational continuum...regardless of the different motives, preferences and intellectual and moral qualities of successive statesmen” (Morgenthau 1970: 5–6). The major subsequent schools of international relations theory also assume, Allison and Zelikow argue, that the nation state is a rational actor. Included here is the structural realism school made famous by Kenneth Waltz, the international institutionalism associated with Robert Keohane and others and even the human rights-focused school of liberalism as espoused by Jack Levy. Rationalism, and the state as a unitary actor are also central tenets of strategic theory, as espoused by Schelling and in the deterrence theories and game-theoretical models, including “subjective expected utility” advocated by Bruce Bueno De Mesquita and

David Lalman, Robert Jervis and others. While Allison and Zelikow are careful to acknowledge that these schools use the rational actor model differently, they argue that it remains popular partly because it is implicit and therefore unexamined, partly because of its simplicity, and also because “it does have significant explanatory power” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 54).

A key theoretical consideration for this model is the extent to which the rationality of the nation-state actor is ‘complete’ or ‘bounded’. Herbert Simon articulated this difference: comprehensive rationality is where all options are evaluated, whereas bounded rationality recognises the limitations of knowledge and computational ability of the decision maker. In a bounded rational framework, rather than labelling decision makers as ‘irrational’, the model accepts that there can be different values and beliefs of the decision-maker, and that if these are accepted as a given, the decision can still be seen as rational in the context of those values and beliefs. Simon argues that to deduce the comprehensive rational choice in a given situation, “we need to know only the choosing organism’s goals and the objective characteristics of the situation. We need to know nothing else about the organism.” On the other hand, to deduce the bounded rational choice, “we must know the choosing organism’s goals, the information and conceptualization it has of the situation and its ability to draw inferences from the information it possesses” (Simon 1985: 294).

Below, the central tenets of the rational actor model are set out.<sup>13</sup>

## **I Basic Unit of Analysis**

This model’s basic premise is that governmental action is choice, a choice which is made by a single actor. “Happenings in foreign affairs are conceived as actions chosen by the nation or national government. Governments select the actions that will maximise strategic goals and objectives” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 24).

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<sup>13</sup> Allison’s models are presented here in the format that they appear in both editions of *Essence*. The numbering/lettering is Allison’s own. This formatting has been criticized as clumsy and overly complex and because it can be read as suggesting more rigor than the models in fact possess (see discussion later in this chapter on page 46). Nevertheless, in order to assess the usefulness of Allison’s work, it is necessary to have his models presented on their own terms, that is, without major paraphrasing or reformatting.

## **II Organizing Concepts**

**A *The Unified National Actor*:** this state is conceived as a rational, unitary decision maker with one set of preferences—that is, one set of beliefs of its national interest, one set of perceived choices and a single estimate of the consequences that follow from each alternative.

**B *The Problem*:** Threats and opportunities arising in the international arena move the nation to act.

**C *Action as Rational Choice*:** the assumption under this model is that there is a clear set of objectives, a clear set of options for advancing these objectives, a good understanding of the consequences of taking each option, and finally, the making of a choice which maximises the value for the country by securing the best consequences.

## **III Dominant Inference Pattern**

The major inference that can be drawn from the Rational Actor Model is that if a nation performed a particular action, that action must have been selected as the best way to achieve the nation's objectives. "The puzzle is solved by finding purposes the action serves" (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 25).

## **IV General Propositions**

The likelihood of a state taking a course of action depends on its values and objectives, the perceived alternative courses of action, what it estimates the consequences to be of each action, and the net valuation of each set of consequences. From this set of variables, Allison suggests "two intuitively evident but powerful propositions" are yielded: that an increase in the perceived costs of a course of action decreases its chance of being pursued and a decrease in the perceived costs increases the chance of an action being pursued (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 25).

## **V Evidence or Methodology**

The chief method employed in the Rational Actor Model is "vicarious problem solving"; that is, the analyst puts himself or herself in the position of the nation-state in question and asks, 'What would I do?' The explanatory power of the model is absolute as "there is no pattern of activity for which an imaginative analyst cannot write a large number of

objective functions such that the pattern of activity maximises each function”. This means that Model I analysts need to “insist on rules of evidence for making assertions about government objectives, options and consequences that permit [them] to distinguish among the various accounts” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 26).

## **Model II: The Organizational Behaviour Model**

Allison’s second model posits that decisions are made only at the most superficial level by government leaders, while the ‘real’ decisions are pre-determined by the *organisations* of government. Using this paradigm, government behaviour can be understood, he argues, “less as deliberate choices and more as outputs of large organizations functioning according to standard patterns of behaviour. Government behaviours relevant to any important problem reflect the independent output of several organisations, partially coordinated by government leaders. Government leaders can substantially disturb but rarely precisely control the specific behaviour of these organizations” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 143).

This second paradigm has a different ‘logic of action’ to that proposed by the rational actor model. Whereas a rational actor explanation relies on a ‘logic of consequences’, an organizational behaviour model prefers to emphasise a ‘logic of appropriateness’. This distinction is highlighted by theorists of organization James March and Herbert Simon:

*The first, an analytic rationality, is a logic of consequences. Actions are chosen by evaluating their probable consequences for the preferences of the actor. The logic of consequences is linked to conceptions of anticipation, analysis and calculation. It operates principally through seclusive heuristic search amongst alternatives, evaluating them for their satisfactoriness as they are found.*

*The second logic of action, of matching rules to situations, rests on a logic of appropriateness. Actions are chosen by recognising a situation as being of a familiar, frequently encountered type, and matching the recognised situation to a set of rules...The logic of appropriateness is linked to conceptions of experience, roles, intuition and expert knowledge. It deals with calculation mainly as a means of retrieving experience preserved in the organisation’s files or individual memories (March and Simon 1993: 8).*

It is important to consider what factors go to make up this ‘logic of appropriateness’. Allison and Zelikow acknowledge that the literature differs between those who favour an efficiency argument and those who prefer explanations relying on organisational culture. Efficiency means that organisations which are created for a political or administrative purpose develop routines and procedures to achieve that purpose: that is, they pursue their goals in a rational way. In this sense, they are like the ‘pin factory’ made famous by economist Adam Smith: tasks are divided between different specialists, with the result that the factory is far more efficient than if individuals each tried to make pins alone. Allison criticises this argument, suggesting that organisations might be set up to efficiently achieve a political goal, but they develop routines and practices which then take on a life of their own, constraining choice. Organisations can continue with a routine because that is what they are programmed to do, even after the balance of cost and benefit has tipped against them. Moreover, organisations adapt to changing circumstances, making the original intention of those who created them less relevant. Instead, organisations themselves begin to define their own purpose and mission and they decide what kinds of specific actions will be needed to give effect to this mission. Allison and Zelikow argue that

*None of this means that government organizations lack central purpose. The point is rather that organizations meaningfully participate in a process in which several purposes are possible and preferred by nominal masters in executive, legislative or judicial branches of government. The organisation’s influence prioritisation of purposes into a definition of their “mission” and are especially influential when the mission is translated, for a specific task, into more operational objectives (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 151).*

In contrast to an explanation based on efficiency, another explanation for organisational behaviour focuses on organisational culture. This school of thought is often termed “new institutionalism” and centres on the concept of institutional identity. This approach puts bureaucrats and managers at the front and centre of political decision, with politicians relegated to a marginal ‘rubber stamp’ role: “the organization and its own desires [are] at the center of the story” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 154). Theorists have argued that actual operational experience is the key to understanding organisational



culture: lessons are drawn from past experiences, and standard operating procedures and repertoires are built up from there. This constrains the conceptualisation of future options.

The difference between an efficiency argument and an organizational culture argument is seen when asking the question “From where do institutions derive their preferences?” The efficiency argument posits that organisations are set up to solve problems: there is a cost to setting up an organization but also efficiency from collective action. Those who favour an organizational culture argument argue that the interests, or problems that are said to require solutions are themselves a social construction, in part shaped by the institutions themselves. Allison and Zelikow do not ask their readers to choose between an efficiency argument and an organizational culture argument, as they contend that both sets of theories agree on the central tenets of an organisational behaviour model, which is that organisations have “a mission, special capabilities linked to operational objectives linked to performance of specific tasks, and reliance on associated routines.” Robert Keohane has summed this up by saying “institutions do not merely reflect the preferences and power of the units constituting them; the institutions themselves shape those preferences and power” (Keohane 1988: 382).

A further element of organizational behaviour that Allison and Zelikow explore is ‘interactive complexity’. They contend that while organisations develop special capabilities and routines, these are challenged when required to interact with the capabilities and routines of a variety of other organisations. This can have unforeseen consequences. The greater the interactive complexity, the more the risk of inaction or conversely, the risk of accidental damage. It is at this point that Model II and Model III—Governmental politics—can intersect.

Efficiency, organisational culture and interactive complexity are some of the general issues involved in using an organisational behaviour paradigm. The actual model then, is set out as follows:

## **I Basic Unit of Analysis: Governmental Action as Organizational Output**

Government action as organizational output has three salient features: first, actual actions taken by governments, be they military deployments or tax concessions, are

organizational, rather than individual outputs. Secondly, the existing organisational capabilities constitute the range of effective choice open to government leaders. Third, organisational systems manage the way information is presented to decision makers; “they structure the situation”. Allison and Zelikow argue “analysis of formal government choice centers on the information provided and the options defined by organisations and the existing organizational capabilities”. The organisations involved “fix the locations of the pieces on the chess board and shade the appearance of the issue” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 164).

## II Organizing Concepts

**A *Organizational Actors*:** these are a “constellation of loosely allied organisations with government leaders at the top”.

**B *Factored problems and Fractionated Power*:** Often complex problems are assigned to different organisations to deal with, and within organisations, they are split between different branches or units. Problems are then dealt with according to existing routines. In this sense, problems are ‘factored’ but by the same process, power to solve a problem is diffused between different organisations and is thus ‘fractionated’. This means it can be hard to agree and implement holistic solutions.

**C *Organizational Missions*:** analysts need to consider each organisation’s mandate, how this is interpreted and by whom. In general, dominant groups within organisations decide and interpret mandates.

**D *Operational Objectives, Special Capabilities and Culture*:** Allison argues that each organisation has “a distinct set of beliefs about how a mission should be implemented and what capabilities are needed or wanted to perform it”. These beliefs create “organisational culture”. To explore this, it is necessary to evaluate how success is defined within the organisation, what information is available to the organisation, what special systems or technologies are unique to that organisation, what are the recruitment, tenure and promotion norms, what is the daily experience of the people in the organisation at the ‘coal face’ (and how this impacts on culture), and how the organisation distributes rewards (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 167).

***E Action as Organizational Output:*** The actions of governments have a ‘programmed’ character so can be predicted easily if enough is known about the organisation. First, the set objectives or targets, for an organisation depend on what other organisations and professionals in the field expect, what the statutory authority for the organisation is, what the demands upon it are from citizens groups and interest groups, and what kinds of bargains have been made within the organisation already. “The setting of targets and constraints represent[s] a quasi-resolution of conflict” so creates a certain stability and immutability about the organisational objectives (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 168–9).

Once the objectives are agreed, they are dealt with sequentially according to organisational priorities. This order of priority affects the final result. Then, once it is agreed the order in which the objectives will be pursued, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the organisation kick in. In the New Zealand context, these SOPs might be processes like mobilising a military deployment, sending a diplomatic cable, convening an interagency taskforce or watch group, or preparing a Cabinet paper. SOPs need to be simple and standardised in order for all personnel in an organisation to follow them, and in the process of simplification and standardisation, choices are inevitably constrained. SOPs are “grounded in the incentive structure of the organisation” so, for individuals, following the agreed procedure will bring rewards from the organisation. (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 170). For complex action, SOPs are clustered into longer term ‘routines’, ‘programmes’ or at the broadest level, ‘repertoires’. These unique ways of clustering and organising action serve to further define problems and constrain solutions.

To continue to deal with issues according to SOPs, organisations need to avoid uncertainty, so they maintain ‘a negotiated environment’; a set of processes to consider and deal with new uncertainties. In foreign policy, for example, international organisations have a key role in providing already agreed processes and working methods to deal with new and difficult situations. Within a state, such as New Zealand, investment is made in intelligence and diplomatic reporting to minimise surprises, and established routines are in place to deal with difficult foreign policy situations as they arise.

Organisations tend to expend effort in order to fit problems into pre-existing models so that standardised repertoires can be used. However, if a problem seems beyond the scope of existing repertoires, then the organisation will search further for a solution, but the conservative, standardising tendencies of organisations means the scope and nature of this search will be constrained and the result will be usually that the solution is only marginally different from existing elements of the repertoire.

Overall, when viewing government action as organisational output, the analyst does not often find radical change occurring, except when there is a sudden 'budgetary feast' so that the government can buy radical new capabilities or set up whole new institutions, or when there is a prolonged 'budgetary famine' so that organisations need to radically regroup in order to survive, or times when there is a dramatic performance failure. While examples of radical change are evident in the case study, organisational explanations can be found for these, drawing on the scenarios outlines above.

***F Central Coordination and Control:*** Allison's model argues that central coordination is always desired but can never be other than weak because of the requirement to divide up the problem and assign it to various parts of different institutions for action: no leader can monitor all this action at the same time, nor understand all the different special capabilities, routines and cultures of each organisation and its sub-units. Control is also constrained because success is hard to measure; for governmental actions (as opposed to business organisations) "outputs cannot be observed, the policy outcomes cannot be observed and neither outputs nor outcomes can be monitored effectively" (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 173). This is especially the case in foreign policy with generic outcomes such as "effective engagement" or "improved relations". Political masters do not have the benefit of financial bottom lines by which to judge, for example, their Foreign Ministry's performance.

***G Decisions by Government Leaders:*** Government leaders' actual decision making power is constrained by organisational behaviour but leaders still have the power to assign a problem to a particular organisation or sub-unit, to choose between different programmes or elements of a repertoire of organisational capabilities, to try existing

routines in a new context and to trigger several different organisational programmes simultaneously. In the longer term, they can create new organisations.

### **III Dominant Inference Pattern: what does this model imply?**

The Organisational Behaviour Model implies that national action remains fairly constant, and changes only at the margins. The best predictor, therefore, of future government action, is the action of the recent past. The model implies that a particular decision can be best explained by looking closely at the organisations involved, and their special capabilities, repertoires and cultures. The analyst cannot conclude that any particular government behaviour reflects the specific intentions of government leaders in the particular case: one cannot work backwards and infer intentionality as the Model I analyst might.

### **IV General Propositions**

***A Existing capabilities influence government choice:*** “It is easier to find the political will to choose an option [that] exists already as something realistic and feasible as opposed to [an option] that is hypothetical or imagined” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 177).

***B Organisational priorities shape organizational implementation:*** Organisations will tend to emphasise those aspects that fit their special capabilities and culture. They will then tackle goals sequentially. The way a decision is interpreted and implemented has a significant bearing on the final outcome.

***C Implementation reflects previously established routines:*** these include standard operating procedures, programmes and repertoires.

***D Leaders neglect calculations of administrative feasibility at their peril:*** Explanations for a gap between decisions and implementation usually relate to administrative feasibility. Leaders can forget that organisations are blunt instruments that cannot deal with complex changes quickly. Leaders overestimate how easy it will be to coordinate the programmes and repertoires of different organisations, and underestimate the unforeseen consequences of such ‘interactive complexity’. Leaders can also expect incomplete and even distorted information (from the leader’s perspective) about a problem.

***E There is limited flexibility and only incremental change in government action:***

Changes to government action tend to be incremental because budgets usually change only incrementally, because organisational culture, priorities and perceptions are relatively stable and new activities are usually only marginal adaptations of old routines. The organisational ‘logic of appropriateness’ means that “a programme is not dropped at the point at which cost outweighs benefits” but rather “organisational momentum carries it beyond the loss point” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 180).

***F Long range planning tends to become institutionalised, then disregarded:*** Short term imperatives and ‘feedback cycles’ tend to determine action.

***G Organisations are inherently ‘imperialist’:*** Organisations consider themselves healthy when they have a stable budget and autonomy over the achievement of their objectives. Organisations tend to seek growth in budget, personnel and areas of policy coverage in order to maintain their autonomy and institutional strength: they tend to seek to build their empire.

***F Directed change is uncommon:*** Political leaders tend to have a shorter tenure than organisational leaders so their ability to direct, sustain and monitor effective organisational change is inherently constrained.

## **V Evidence**

An analyst using a Model II explanation would find ways to examine and assess specific organisational characteristics such as routines, repertoires, special characteristics and culture, and from there, draw conclusions about how these impacted on governmental action and behaviour. The analyst would seek to draw a ‘logic of appropriateness’ for how action was defined, interpreted and implemented in practice. Any difference between decision and implementation would be explained by a gap between political leaders’ intentions and organisational capabilities and agendas in carrying out those intentions.

## **Model III : The Governmental Politics Model**

Allison’s third model offers a more dynamic explanation for government decisions and a greater role for government leaders and elites. Leaders are not “monolithic” like

organisations, but rather, are “players in a central, competitive game—politics”. Governmental output is the result of political bargaining games: the interaction of competing preferences such as conceptions of national, organisational and personal goals. There is no consistent set of national strategic objectives.(Allison and Zelikow 1999: 255). Model III exposes policy as a ‘collage’ rather than as coherent, rationally-decided strategy, or as the pre-programmed output of monolithic organisations. It focuses on the perceptions and positions of key leaders, on the variety of issues that are presented for decision, on the sequencing of decision—“piecemeal streams of decision are more important than state-steady choices”, on the formal rules and semi-formal and informal procedures for making decisions and on the required and changing coalitions of elected and bureaucratic actors on the inside, as well as coalitions between these insiders and those on the ‘outside’ such as legislators, lobbyists, media and foreign government officials.

In providing context, Allison and Zelikow note the psychology of group decision making. Group processes, at their best, provide for better decisions: more information is shared, more analysis is offered, a wider consideration of relevant values and interests is undertaken. There is more imagination available in identifying options for action, and a greater collective alertness to early warning signs of possible failure. It is acknowledged that popular sentiment often sees group decision making as cumbersome and ineffective—there is, Allison and Zelikow argue, “a common belief that hard public problems can generally only be solved by concentrating authority”—represented by the perennial attraction in the popular mind of the ‘benign dictator’. However they argue that history has regularly proved this wrong, with decisions by committees proving their value over time. (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 265–71)<sup>14</sup>

Allison and Zelikow also discuss Alexander George’s concept of the ‘action channels’ for decision, which George argues are more important than the organisational ‘boxes’. He also suggests that action channels need to be custom-made to the

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<sup>14</sup> Allison and Zelikow draw on Richard Overly’s work *Why the Allies Won the War* (New York, W.W Norton, 1995) to illustrate this point, arguing that the Allies made decisions primarily by committee while German decisions were made by a single dictator, with the result that the Germany economy and war machinery performed far less effectively than that of Britain, despite Germany’s superior raw resources, manpower, scientific skill and factory floor space.

requirements, rather than a 'one size fits all', and that improvements in information processing mean better decisions. George argues that successful decisions often come down to such mundane things as scheduling of meetings, preparation of meeting papers, advice in advance for key participants, note taking and distribution of the records.(George 1980: 10)

The context for the Governmental politics paradigm includes other aspects of the political game. The first is the "principal-agent" problem, whereby it becomes important to distinguish the perspectives of key political figures from those of their staffers and key bureaucrats, while at the same time acknowledging that these officials are players in their own right, who have a good deal of influence over leaders' views, through their control of information, and in how leaders' views are presented to wider audiences. Allison and Zelikow also discuss the role of individuals, saying analysts must explore personality types as well as how organisational cultures and 'epistemic communities' of like-minded professionals affect political personas. The model requires an understanding of the decision making rules, both formal and informal, the way ad hoc groups behave differently from ongoing and more formal committees, and the way issues are defined, agendas are set and solutions are considered. Allison and Zelikow argue that if issues are framed as being especially attractive or urgent, they are likely to be considered early, and if a new problem is somehow linked to, or considered part of, an existing problem, it is also more likely to gain governmental attention.

A key element of the Government politics paradigm is the notion of 'groupthink', attributed to Irving Janis. Janis' thesis is that when smaller groups of between six and twelve people make policy, they exhibit a driving urge for cohesion, which leads to suppression of dissent and consideration of alternatives. He points to the stress of decision making on individuals, which causes them to feel uncertainty and to vacillate. Once a decision is made, individuals will tend to cope with the stress by 'defensive avoidance', exaggerating the positive aspects of the decision, downplaying the negative, downplaying their personal responsibility for the decision, and exaggerating the remoteness of any chance of action—"it'll never be implemented anyway". Group think, therefore, is where "conformity pressures begin to dominate, the striving for unanimity fosters the pattern of defensive avoidance with the characteristic reliance of shared



rationalisations that bolster the least objectionable alternative” (Janis and Mann 1977: 133)

As with the organisational behaviour model, the governmental politics model highlights the complexity of joint action. Obviously, the more people involved, the more decisions are required and the greater the variety of preferences and agendas. Allison and Zelikow point to the increasing complexity of Presidential decision making in the USA, with the growing role of Congress. (It could be argued that a similar rise of activism by the legislature that can be seen to be happening in New Zealand under MMP). Moreover, for foreign policy, as distinct from other kinds of government policy, the complexity of joint action is increased “when it involves not only the concurrent action of branches of one government, but the coordination of actions of several governments in the form of an international organisation or tightly linked coalitions”. “In the post cold war world, complex and joint actions have become the norm” (Allison and Zelikow 1999).

The central tenets of the government politics model are set out below.

## **I Basic Unit of Analysis**

The basic unit of analysis of the third paradigm is that the decisions and actions of governments are “intra-national political resultants” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 295). They result from compromise, conflict and confusion of officials and government leaders, who all have diverse and unequal influence, and they reflect the way the political game is structured, the action channels used and the way deadlines force the issue. Decisions are not part of broader strategic vision, but rather are “an agglomeration or collage composed of relatively independent decisions and actions by individuals and groups of players”. The collage comprises both formal decisions and less formal agreements and understandings.

## **II Organising Concepts**

*A Who are the Players?:* These are political leaders (that is, Ministers in the New Zealand system), their staffers and government officials. In a ‘second tier’ of players, members of the legislature, the media, lobby groups and members of the public also influence government decisions, although mostly in an indirect way. Players each have

advantages and handicaps, and clusters of obligations. The ‘hard core’ of the governmental politics mix, Allison and Zelikow argue, is personality. This includes amongst other factors each person’s tolerance of stress, operating style and previous personal experiences.<sup>15</sup>

***B What are the Players’ perceptions, preferences and stands?*** These are shaped by personal views, including on what is in the national interest, and about what is best personally for each player. They are also shaped by organizational agendas and parochial priorities, and by the stakes in each negotiation: that is, by how much the players in question care about the decision at hand. Also important are deadlines, which force players to take stands on issues at particular times. Deadlines can arise from budget processes, key speeches, visits and crises, all of which can necessitate decisions and actions.

***C What determines the players’ impact?*** Allison and Zelikow argue that impact is determined by the players’ bargaining advantages on one hand (their formal authority and responsibility, their control over information before a decision and implementation after a decision, their influences in other arenas, their access to the most senior figures) and on the other hand, the players’ skill and will to use their bargaining advantages. Important too is players’ perceptions of the bargaining advantages of others, and their will to use them.

***D What is the nature of the political game itself?*** A key contention is that action is shaped by ‘action channels’: that is, the regularized means of taking action on a specific issue. In the New Zealand context, this might follow a pathway such as an intelligence evaluation, an officials’ decision at working level, a submission to the key Minister(s), a decision by a senior officials committee, a Cabinet paper, a decision by the relevant Cabinet committee then a decision by the full Cabinet, followed by a press statement.

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<sup>15</sup> Alison and Zelikow’s description of the players in this model is very US-centric, particularly in the importance accorded to ‘staffers’ and in the assumption that heads of government agencies are mostly political appointments. A New Zealand version of this model might portray a typically more predictable set of relationships between elected Ministers and career civil servants who are assumed to be politically neutral. The role of Ministerial staffers would subsequently be less important, and Ministers could be expected to be experienced in the domestic political system before being appointed, compared to their US counterparts who are often drawn from outside the electoral system—e.g. from academia. Nevertheless, as the case study will show, the requirement for coalition politics under a MMP system creates a new dynamic to governmental politics to which the New Zealand system took time to adapt.

Budget action channels are especially central in determining governmental action. Allison states that “action channels structure the game by pre-selecting the major players, determining their usual points of entrance into the game, and distributing particular advantages and disadvantages for each game” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 301). Issues are recognized and determined within an established channel, for which rules exist, either explicitly (e.g. laws, treaties, Cabinet manuals) or informally. Although some of the ‘rules’ for decision are fuzzy and ever-changing, in general the rules define the limits of acceptable politicking on any issue. Other factors that set the parameters of decision are the pace of decision needed, the broader political and international environment and the rewards that are on offer. And of course, once a decision is made, the game is not over. Decisions can be ignored or implemented differently. The degree of faithful implementation depends on the degree of specificity in the decision, yet in group context, decisions are often required to be vague or general in order to secure consensus.

### **III The Dominant Inference Pattern**

Under Allison’s third model, when the political game is exposed, the action taken is shown to be the result of these political bargains and compromises. The bureaucratic politics analyst explains decisions by showing whose view won the day, and why.

### **IV General propositions**

The governmental politics model relies on a complex interplay between personalities, organisations, decision making rules and overall circumstances. Such an analysis tends to stress the uniqueness of each situation, making it harder to draw general propositions about decisions. Allison nevertheless makes some propositions.

First, the preferences and stands of individuals can have a significant impact on governmental action. And, the advantages and disadvantages of each player differ substantially from one action channel to another, and at different stages within the action channel.

Secondly, the decisions and actions that result are seldom the result of one clear intention of any one individual. There are always a number of players involved with different perceptions of the issue and the appropriate solutions. Decisions are also

seldom part of an agreed holistic doctrine, but rather represent “a momentary operational convergence of a mix of motives”. In addition, actions that emerge are seldom the result of just one political compromise, but rather a number of games at the same time, plus some foul-ups too. They therefore “do not reflect a coordinated government strategy and are thus difficult to read as conscious signals” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 306).

Thirdly, solutions are not found by a focus on the problem itself (as rational analysis might propose) but rather, by the participants focusing on both the larger context and the narrower, immediate decision at hand. This means decisions often do not recommend radical change. Where radical change does occur, it is because there is a convergence of the interests of leaders and organizations, or, as Allison puts it, when there are “chiefs seeking a solution and Indians seeking a problem” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 307).

The fourth general proposition of this model is Miles’ Law: ‘where you stand depends on where you sit’. Allison and Zelikow argue that this is especially important in decisions that involve budgets and procurement, where organizational agendas will mostly determine an individual’s stance. An auxiliary aspect of this is ‘where you sit influences what you see’—the face of the issue and the relative importance of the problem at hand are shaped by organizational factors. (Miles’ Law has been arguably the most controversial aspect of the bureaucratic politics model—this will be discussed later in this Chapter.)

The fifth proposition is that while, on paper, leaders might have more power than officials, in practice leaders’ power is circumscribed. They are often only brought into the decision process late, or when there is urgency or a crisis, and they often must take a number of different decisions at the same time. Leaders struggle to get officials to give them enough time to gather alternative forms of information and clarify uncertainties. Leaders can have shorter political lives than officials, and less specialist knowledge of the issue at hand. Officials (or “Indians”) on the other hand, struggle to get commitments from their colleagues to take an issue forward for decision, and when they do manage to do that, they struggle to get the attention of the leaders. The Ministers’ offices perform a

crucial function in matching the needs of leaders to get the information they want and the needs of officials to get attention for their issues.

A sixth proposition relates to what Allison calls the 51–49 principle: that is, in a context where decisions are being made all the time, and mostly without the benefit of lengthy strategic analysis, even those that are close calls must be supported unequivocally by leaders and officials after the event. “Reasonable players are forced to argue much more confidently than they would if they were detached judges. They are not always dissembling. They internalize, often unconsciously, the demands made upon them by the game” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 309).

A seventh proposition is that it is possible for other countries’ representatives to participate in the intra-national political game. In the US-centric paradigm given by Allison, this is noted as an exception.

Allison’s final cluster of propositions includes a contention that mis-expectations and mis-communications can influence decision. Sometimes everyone expects another person or agency to act, and so no-one does. And sometimes “in a noisy environment, each player thinks he or she has spoken with a stronger and clearer voice than others may have actually heard” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 310). Allison also argues that many players choose reticence as a safe way of proceeding: a player expends less political capital, avoids damaging his or her prospects in the other political games in which he or she is engaged, and can also subsequently interpret the outcome in a way that suits.

Allison makes some specific propositions for foreign policy that arise from the Model III paradigm. First, on the use of force, he argues that this needs wide agreement within the political system, that the outcome will depend entirely on how the issue is framed and that forceful action will be more likely if it is framed as an incremental move. On military action, Allison argues that there will be a delay evident as those governmental leaders favouring action work to persuade others to come on board. They argue that military action generally needs to be agreed by the plurality, and will only occur after extensive consultation with military players.

## V Evidence

Documentary evidence of political bargaining is rare and key players are often unwilling to discuss political games while they are underway. If they are asked to recall them after the event, the traps of reconstructed memory can be evident. (The one advantage of the email age for researchers and analysts is that more informal political bargaining might now be done over email, and filed on archives: there are clear examples evident from the case study.) Nevertheless, a governmental politics analysis is, as Allison argues “an art”, which however still rests on “a foundation of craftsmanship” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 312).

### ***Critical responses to Allison’s models: a literature survey***

Having set out the three models, we must assess the extent to which they form an accepted approach to the study of foreign policy decision-making. Here, it is important to acknowledge both the wide critical acclaim Allison’s approach received and its ongoing use in a wide range of general texts, but also, the scholarly criticism that the models have attracted.

Allison’s three models were widely lauded at the time of the publication of *Essence of Decision* in 1971 as a new breakthrough in the application of rigorous theoretical models to the study of political and historical events. Harrison Wagner in his 1974 review of *The Essence of Decision* said:

*it may, in fact, be the most generally persuasive attempt ever made to show the relevance of theorizing to the treatment of what are ordinarily thought to be the main problems of the study of international politics. Its general appeal is primarily due to the effectiveness of Allison’s theoretical arguments in his analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis, which contains a number of striking insights and information no-one else had thought to look for. The results are a much more complex analysis of the event than anyone else has offered and a radically different understanding of what happened from the one most people had previously adhered to. To the extent that these considerable virtues are the direct result of Allison’s reflections on the theoretical literature mentioned, they seem to be the product of his attempt to make these three paradigms as explicit as possible, enabling him to derive as much insight from the assumptions of each as he could, and to develop alternative explanations for this event, which had the heuristic effect of leading him to*

*look for possibilities that had not occurred to analysts more nearly the prisoners of a single, and poorly articulated set of assumptions. These are, I think, among the important benefits to be derived from the explicit theory construction, and Allison's example is therefore one well worth taking seriously (Wagner 1974: 446–7).*

Even Allison's critics were prepared to credit him with the creation of a new way of thinking about political events. Desmond Ball, for example, says, "It was something of a seminal event, one of those relatively rare occasions in which a single book or previously unknown scholar manages to influence the direction of scholarly inquiry of an entire discipline" (Ball 1974: 72). Stephen Krasner calls *The Essence of Decision* "the definitive statement" of bureaucratic politics theory (Krasner 1972: 160).

Nevertheless, Allison's models also had their critics in the early and mid 1970s. (See for example Krasner 1972; Steele 1972; Art 1973; Ball 1974; Cornford 1974; Perlmutter 1974; Wagner 1974; Yanarella 1975; Freedman 1976; Steiner 1977) Some reacted against the supposed 'newness' of Allison's work, arguing that late 1950s and early 1960s scholars such as Roger Hilsman, Samuel Huntington, Richard Neustadt and Warner Schilling had explored the pluralism inherent in policy formation (Art 1973:468; Freedman 1976:441). Barton Bernstein argues that Allison owes a great deal to earlier historians who had also noted the value of looking at organizational and bureaucratic influences over political decision, albeit in a less explicitly theoretical way. (Bernstein 2000: 4)

Another criticism was that Allison's 1971 edition did not treat the three models equally. Steele, for example, suggests that Model III is "clearly the product that Allison is attempting to sell" (Steele 1972: 44). Others have suggested it is this model that was closest to his heart. Later Allison attempted to merge Models II and III—a merger many have critics have taken as a given when describing the so-called 'bureaucratic politics' approach (Allison and Halperin 1972; Cornford 1974). Others have suggested this merger was problematic and that it is better to keep the distinction between Models II and III (Ball 1974: 84; Bendor and Hammond 1992: 304; Welch 1992). Obviously Allison and Zelikow have chosen this path in the second edition. Part of the problem in the distinction between Models II and III is that sometimes they overlap; for example, at times organisations are involved in 'pulling and hauling' but according to their own

institutional agendas—demonstrating both Model II and III drivers (Welch 1992: 118). The desire for analytic clarity is further thwarted by Allison's changing terminology—e.g. from 'bureaucratic politics' in his 1969 article to 'governmental politics' in the 1971 edition, and from 'organizational process' to 'organizational behaviour' for Model II.

Critics also suggested Allison and his cohort tended towards a "bureaucratic determinism" in that, in privileging organizational processes and power struggles within the bureaucracy, the analyst then ignores the more politically challenging question of the ideologies and values of a country's foreign policy, and the question of responsibility for decisions (Ball 1974: 71). Critics saw bureaucratic politics' popularity as rooted in American politics of the 1960s, and in particular, the desire by some 'insiders'—Allison himself included—to 'explain away' the Viet Nam war (Krasner 1972; Steele 1972; Freedman 1976; Bernstein 2000). Ronald Steele argued that analysts of American foreign policy had first blamed communism for all ills, then the revisionists has similarly blamed US imperialism for all that was wrong. The advent of bureaucratic politics theory, he argued, was a new approach, if not necessarily a helpful one:

*Now come the post revisionists, who question whether anyone is responsible for anything, and who tell us that the most important thing is not what decisions are made but how they are made. The argument between left and right about political ends goes over their heads and to their complete indifference. They are interested in means, not ends. To ask them the basic question that turns on orthodox and revisionist historians "who started the Cold War?" is to pose a non sequitur. There is no single cause, they argue, but only a process and to find out what happened we have to look at the real sources of decision making, the bureaucracy. Thus the study of diplomacy becomes nothing less than an analysis of bureaucratic politics. Exit the historian, enter the computer punching social scientists.*

*In concentrating on process at the expense of substance, it avoids value judgments...it tells us that there are no longer individual responsibilities, only 'decision making processes'. People make decisions, but only organizations go through processes and they are what really count. For a growing number of political scientists this is the higher realism. On closer inspection however, it looks suspiciously like a high-level cop out" (Steele 1972: 43).*

Stephen Krasner also suggests that the failures of the Viet Nam war were being explained away by Allison and others, through a focus on "the machine" of government;



“machines cannot be held accountable for what they do, nor can the men caught in their workings” (Krasner 1972: 162). He argues that

*This [bureaucratic politics] vision is misleading, dangerous and compelling; misleading because it obscures the power of the President, dangerous because it undermines the assumptions of democratic politics by relieving high officials of responsibility; and compelling because it offers leaders an excuse for their failures and scholars an opportunity for innumerable reinterpretations and publications” (Krasner 1972: 162).*

Desmond Ball cites scholars who refute this argument (e.g. Richard J. Barnet), suggesting instead that a bureaucratic politics analysis makes *all* those involved in a decision accountable for their actions; it “permits the proper identification of and imputation of responsibility to these [officials]; it is its great worth, in other words, that it allows the naming of names” (Ball 1974: 87). Scholars such as Barnet argue that this does not conflict with an analysis which argues that on the great issues, e.g. of war, the president makes the final decision.

Krasner argues that “for both the missile crisis and Viet Nam, it was the baggage of culture and values, not bureaucratic position, that determined the aims of high officials” (Krasner 1972: 166). Robert Art side-steps the moral judgment required for an assessment of good or bad values, but points to “the crucial significance of fundamental assumptions (what I appropriately think should be called ‘mind-sets’ ) that participants bring to their jobs in determining their perspectives and subsequent stances”. Art suggests “generational mindsets” about what is considered best for the nation are a greater influence than bureaucratic position or ‘pulling and hauling on participants’ stances on key foreign policy issues (Art 1973: 470). Freedman argues that the tussles of bureaucratic politics are not random, and not about selfish power plays by officials but are “reasonably patterned and linked to [different officials’] conceptions of the national interest” (Freedman 1976: 449).

Allison’s use of the so-called Miles’ Law (‘where you stand depends on where you sit’) was particularly criticised. Critics argued that values, mindsets, baggage, or personal views of what is in the national interest are fundamentally more important than bureaucratic position. Several also revisited the Cuban missile crisis case study and

concluded that Miles' Law did not even hold true for that<sup>16</sup>. In the 1999 edition, Allison and Zelikow tackled this aspect, noting that the Miles' Law proposition had drawn more criticism than any other part of the approach. They contend that readers had misread the word 'depends', arguing that 'depends' does not mean 'always determined by' but rather 'substantially affected by'. They explain that Miles' Law should properly be understood as "where one stands is influenced, most often influenced strongly, by where one sits. Knowledge of the organizational seat at the table yields significant clues about a likely stand" (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 307).

The basic criticism of Miles' Law, however, is not changed much by the second edition's more nuanced explanation of its meaning. Critics in the 1970s and after have argued that it becomes fundamentally impossible to assess the extent to which his or her bureaucratic position has determined each individual's stance, let alone the final collective decision outcome. Art calls it "waffling" and says it is "surrounded by so many qualifiers and such ambiguity that its reliability (and hence predictive power) must be seriously questioned" (Art 1973: 473). Bernstein notes that the revised 1999 formula doesn't change the difficulty of testing or giving weight to the variables, even assuming analysts could agree in advance on how to interpret the softened version. He argues instead that "the dictum should be that an adviser's personality and general experience, far more than bureaucratic affiliation, often heavily influence that individual's perceptions and advice, especially in potentially deadly crises" (Bernstein 2000: 20).

Another criticism of *Essence* is that the case study of the Cuban missile crisis is not representative of normal governmental decision making. It is, rather, unique for its "concentrated period and the sense of peril and possible disaster" (Bernstein 2000: 8). Some have argued that this makes it a disingenuously easy case study to explore for a bureaucratic politics analysis—Steele says it is a "manageable laboratory specimen" and more importantly, the only foreign policy "success" of the Kennedy Administration (Steele 1972: 44). Others have argued the opposite: that bureaucratic politics analysis is better suited to slower time decisions. This is given as a possible explanation why

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<sup>16</sup> For example, some officials who could be expected to be hawks e.g. the Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, were in the event dovish, while others such as Robert E Kennedy, who had no particular bureaucratic barrow to push, took a far more belligerent line.

Allison's models are not always upheld by detailed historical analysis of the crisis (Krasner 1972; Art 1973; Bernstein 2000). Allison himself has argued that budgets and procurement decisions are more likely to be amenable to explanation in terms of bureaucratic politics than shorter run security crises (Allison 1971: 176).<sup>17</sup> Taking this cue, Morton Halperin sought to apply the bureaucratic politics approach to a slower decision making process of the Anti Ballistic Missile system which the Johnson Administration decided to proceed with in 1967: Halperin's text *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* stands alongside Allison's as one of the pioneers in this field. Yet critics such as Ball have concluded that Halperin is nevertheless no more able to show any "inviolable or unambiguous connection between organizational position and policy stance" than Allison and that "some of Allison's inadequacies are intrinsic to the [bureaucratic politics] approach" (Ball 1974: 82).

One of the most consistent criticisms of Allison's bureaucratic politics paradigm is that it ignores power hierarchies amongst the players, and in particular, the role of the President in US politics. Krasner argues that bureaucratic analysts "ignore the critical effect which the President has in choosing his advisers, establishing their access to decision-making and influencing bureaucratic interests". He maintains that "the ability of bureaucracies to independently establish policies is a function of Presidential attention. Presidential attention is a function of Presidential values" (Krasner 1972: 168). Ball argues that Allison's interpretation of the Cuban missile crisis "fails to appreciate the role of President Kennedy, *qua* President, as decider. The bureaucratic model posits outcomes as a result of manoeuvrings by the relevant players. But it seems clear in this case that the outcomes were the result of presidential decisions" (Ball 1974: 80). Art asks how far the pulling and hauling' deflects Presidential decisions from Presidential intent. He notes that other proponents of bureaucratic politics appear to want to "have their cake and eat it", that is assert the resultant effect of bureaucratic perspective and yet at the same time acknowledge the President's signal importance in foreign policy formulation. Art argues

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<sup>17</sup> Krasner argues that there is one possible caveat to this; "in crises when time is short the President may have to accept bureaucratically options which could be amended under more leisurely conditions" Krasner, S. D. (1972). "Are Bureaucracies Important (or Allison Wonderland?)." *Foreign Policy* 7(Summer 1972).

that the President's advisers, since chosen by the President, will tend to agree with him, but when they are split, the President's power is actually enhanced as he will be free to decide the option that is best for him politically (Art 1973: 474). Bendor and Hammond question the extent to which the President really has to bargain with his subordinates, suggesting that this is a new proposition and goes beyond the contentions of earlier proponents of governmental bargaining (including Neustadt and Huntington), who simply suggested that the President's power was variable, depending on the issue, and depending on the amount of information he had been given by subordinates (Bendor and Hammond 1992). Art summarizes that presidential choice remains central; "the slippage between decision and outcome is least on those issues the President considers the most important, and most on the issues he thinks are less important" (Art 1973: 478).

While the issue of the unique deciding role of the President in US politics may not be strictly relevant for an application of the bureaucratic politics approach to a Westminster system (this issue is discussed later in this chapter), it does nevertheless underline a problem regularly identified with Model III, which is that not all 'players' are equal in the 'pulling and hauling' game. Allison, in *Essence of Decision*, seems unsure how to treat the hierarchies amongst the different bureaucrats and players: as Bernstein notes "the book ignored or minimized the importance of who initially stipulated the agenda for pulling and hauling and who chose the players in it" (Bernstein 2000: 7).<sup>18</sup> Bernstein notes that the 1999 edition accepts this as a failing in the earlier text, and Allison and Zelikow "more fully acknowledge the importance of hierarchy and differential power among advisers and the President's choice of advisers and his efforts to set the agenda are significant considerations for the analyst" (Bernstein 2000: 9).

The issue of hierarchies also comes up in criticisms of Model II. Allison does not specify which organizational processes take precedence over others, when and why. Allison also does not address the fact that there can be a large body of standard operating

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<sup>18</sup> Bernstein does note however that Allison and Halperin's 1972 essay ("Bureaucratic Politics: a Paradigm and Some Policy Implications", *World Politics* Vol 24 Special Supplement 1972) does attempt to include the importance of hierarchies, of distinguishing internal bureaucratic differences from Bureaucratic politics and the importance of multiple interests in Bureaucratic politics. Bernstein, B. J. (2000). "Understanding Decisionmaking, US Foreign Policy and the Cuban Missile Crisis: A Review Essay." *International Security* 25(1): 134-164.

p 28 FN 7

procedures for a given situation; the choice of which SOP to use therefore becomes much less a question of routine or process and more a question of politics (Bendor and Hammond 1992: 311).

Another two key ‘gaps’ in the original *Essence of Decision* framework are the role played by Congress, and by the President’s electoral concerns. These are not the concerns of bureaucrats, but can impact heavily on Presidential choice. Ball argues that during the Cuban missile crisis, given the short time frame, Congress had no major role and thus the role of Congress is not covered in depth in the models (Ball 1974: 79). By comparison, for more general foreign policy decisions, Art argues that Congressional stances were central to eventual outcomes (Art 1973: 485).

On the other hand, the downplaying of electoral concerns in the models does not sit easily with either an application of the models to other US foreign policy questions or with the evidence from the Cuban missile crisis itself, where, two months out from elections, President JF Kennedy and his brother Robert Kennedy were acutely aware of how their decisions would be received by the electorate. Art says this missing factor was “not the politics of executive legislative relations, not the politics of executive pulling and hauling but the politics of getting elected, staying in office and carrying constituents along in support of particular foreign policies” (Art 1973: 472). Ball echoes this point, bringing in a wider range of what he calls ‘less proximate factors’; “of promises and commitments previously made, of values and response patterns which have become ingrained, of the unspoken but omnipresent assumption that power must be retained at all costs and that relations between the various branches of government should not be disrupted if at all possible and of the recent political history which environs the crisis situation”(Ball 1974: 79). If domestic political concerns are to be incorporated into a bureaucratic politics model, the question becomes where. Halperin brings electoral concerns into his expanded version of Model III, but Ball notes that this brings his model “dangerously close to the rational politics of Model I” (Ball 1974: 85). In the revised 1999 edition of *Essence of Decision I*, domestic political concerns are included under an expanded Model I but the parallel question is then raised—why they are not considered part of Model III ? Bernstein considers that these factors “sit uneasily with the book’s theoretical framework for a rational actor” (Bernstein 2000: 16).

The next set of criticisms of Allison's models centre around their 'inequality' as comparable analytic tools. As discussed earlier, Allison was clearly understood to favour his third model, and thus came to be associated with the school of thought known as bureaucratic politics. The result of the implicit privileging of Model III is that Allison stands accused of misrepresenting the other models. In particular, critics have suggested he has unfairly constrained the Rational Actor Model so it seems, by contrast, unhelpful "rather in the fashion of a straw man" (Steele 1972: 45). The presumption that rational actors would only have one major goal was one such constraint, as it requires the analyst to choose the pre-eminent goal. Commentators have argued that rationality makes no such prescription, and indeed pursuit of one goal might make a rational actor appear monomaniacal which would be the antithesis of rationality (Bendor and Hammond 1992: 305). The later edition of *Essence of Decision* appears to soften the stance about single goals, and indeed, acknowledging the bounded rationalism of values and objectives in setting such goals (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 18).<sup>19</sup> The 1999 edition also attempts to more thoroughly incorporate into the Rational Actor Model notions of bounded rationality as opposed to perfect rationality. A discussion of this distinction was present in the 1971 edition, but critics found that it was not operationalised in the model itself. The revised edition acknowledges that rational actors can have incomplete information, and can have specific ideologies or mindsets, which might seem in themselves rational in that actor's political context, even if not to those from other contexts (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 19–23).

Likewise, in criticising Model III, scholars have argued that the presumption that political players are always in conflict is false. This is all the more so if the political players in a US system are all chosen by the President. (A parliamentary system corollary could be where Cabinet members all belong to the same party, share its ideals and stand by its electoral manifesto.) It is possible to have occasions where all bureaucratic or governmental players agree, and that in such cases while there may be minor differences

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<sup>19</sup> Allison's co-author Philip Zelikow has described the way a range of fundamental values and interests interact with more prosaic implementation and maintenance factors to create government policy. Zelikow, P. (1994). "Foreign Policy Engineering: From Theory to Practice and Back Again." *Ibid.* 18(Spring 1994): 143-71.

over ways and means, the presumption in Allison's Model III that the outcome will not be what any one player intended does not hold true. The question becomes "how often and over what do participants disagree in their policy stances? How often and over what issues do participants *not* disagree over the thrust of action to be taken?" (Art 1973: 476). Welch and Bendor and Hammond also highlight the pay-offs for compromise, noting that there are situations where "bureaucratic harmony is valued more highly than optimal efficiency" (Welch 1992: 134). There is also a difference between conflict caused by different beliefs and conflict caused by different goals—each produces its own political outcome (Bendor and Hammond 1992: 314). Degrees of compromise have been identified as a key difference between bureaucratic politics in a US and a Westminster system. (Nossal 1979).

In trying to give some theoretical rigour to these issues of multiples goals and conflicting or harmonized goals, Bendor and Hammond have proposed the following "typology" of the models :

Decision-makers are:

	Perfectly rational		Imperfectly rational	
Single decision-maker	1a complete information	1 b incomplete information	2a complete information	2b incomplete information
Many decision-makers, same goals	3a complete information	3b incomplete information	4a complete information	4b incomplete information
Many decision-makers, conflicting goals	5a complete information	5b incomplete information	6a complete information	6b incomplete information

Table 1.1

Model I can be located either in box 1a or 1b but with a boundedly rational explanation of Model 1, it might be located in box 2a or 2b. Model II could be in Model 4b or 6b. Model III could be located in 5a or 5b or 6a or 6b. They argue that while they consider “Allison’s initial instincts were on the right track”, nevertheless “our simple typology raises some serious questions about what is driving each of Allison’s models”. Moreover they note that identifying where each model fits into this typology “does not yield a detailed prediction about what policy outcomes to expect from that model” (Bendor and Hammond 1992: 303–4).

A further consistent criticism of Allison’s models is that they are not specific enough about which models apply at the different stages of decision: that is, the provision of information, the deciding and the implementation of decision. Some of the models might apply more at different points: e.g. organisational processes are more important at the information and implementation stages, whereas bureaucratic politics might play out more clearly at the moment of decision (Art 1973: 477; Welch 1992: 117). Allison’s



models also do not adequately address the realities for decisions made over a longer period. This is important for both for a rational model (the costs and benefits evaluated vary according to when decisions are to be made and implemented) and for the governmental politics and organizational behaviour models, where actors' differing levels of patience may feature, as may timeframes for various organizational agendas and processes (Bendor and Hammond 1992: 306).

The impact of the external environment on decision is largely absent in Allison's models. Synder and Diesing, for example, argue that the interplay between external and internal bargaining is key, and that the stances taken by individual participants tend to mirror the spectrum of external bargaining options available, whether coercion or accommodation or somewhere in between. They say that "the bureaucratic politics theorists miss this point because of their commitment to the notion that internal bargaining positions stem primarily from agency interests" (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 239). They also argue that the implication of the bureaucratic politics model is that policy makers who want to influence another state's behaviour need to immerse themselves in that state's internal bargaining. This, they argue, is unlikely to be successful, especially in a crisis.

While some time has been taken here to highlight the more frequent criticisms of Allison's models that appear in the literature (their downplaying of the role and power of the President, public opinion and the role of Congress, the simplification of the goals of the rational actor, organizations and bureaucratic players, and presumption that bureaucratic position determines policy stance, the question of time factors and the role of the external environment) it should be noted that these have been addressed to a greater or lesser extent in the second edition. Several of these criticisms are more about how the models were presented in the 1971 edition, rather than a criticism of their inherent value as an analytical tool.

Nevertheless, a theoretical analysis of Allison's models leaves us with two key problems remaining, which need to be examined carefully in order to pursue this study's purpose, which is to assess the usefulness of Allison's approach in theory and in practice. The first problem is that the models can be circular, with evidence and theory not clearly

distinguished. The second is that the models are overly complex and thus do not actually allow the analyst to predict decision outcomes.

In some respects, these two criticisms go to the heart of the debate between political science and history as disciplines. Allison hoped his models would provide new theoretical rigour to the discussion of historical decisions and future decisions; “For the social scientists, the theoretical chapters constitute the contribution: making explicit the implicit conceptual frameworks within which investigations proceed and spelling out some of the systematic implications of alternative models” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: x). Historians such as Bernstein concede that Allison was indeed often “making explicit what close-grained historical studies had handled in ad hoc, rather eclectic and non-theoretical ways” (Bernstein 2000: 4).

On the other hand, critics both historian and political scientist while acknowledging the importance of Allison’s work for attempting to bring rigour to the study of government decision and for raising questions that go beyond a rational actor framework (e.g. Welch 1992: 37) nevertheless consistently suggest that Allison’s models do not pass the test for theoretical rigour that they set for themselves, and that there are serious problems with their internal logic.

The first problem is that the theories, and the evidence for them, can appear somewhat circular. The models are held to be intuitively true so the analyst looks for evidence to support the model, rather than testing the model on the basis of the evidence. As Bernstein notes, the three models or lenses “have a peculiar quality of fragmenting reality and making observation and knowledge dependant on the chosen theory”. He suggests that Allison has “implicitly relaxed the evidential standards when he found examples to fit his theories” and the models slide easily from an evidence basis to speculation (Bernstein 2000: 6–9).<sup>20</sup>

Bobrow suggests that the problem is that the theories themselves are not models which determine behaviour but rather pre-theories “because they are only perspectives,

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<sup>20</sup> Bernstein, a historian, examines in some detail the kinds of historical evidence that Allison uses, suggesting that his explicit favouring of memoirs and interviews with key players and his implicit dismissal of the value of archives reflects his prejudice in favour of a bureaucratic politics models and thus means his examination of the evidence is not impartial. Bernstein comments that interviews and memoirs can reflect “selective memory and self-serving interests” of players [Bernstein 2000 p 9].

they provide no advance expectation (prediction of the outcome of that thought” (cited in Ball 1974: 88). Ball suggests that “it is not possible to determine either what is assumption and what is determination or what is illustration or what is operationalized in a testable form”. Bendor and Hamond echo this concern about the weakness of the theories’ specific propositions and the question of evidence, using the more theoretical terms of political science:

*One of the purposes of developing an explicit model is rigorously to derive the logical implications of one’s fundamental assumptions. Yet neither of the two models (II and III) for which Essence of Decision is best known are the propositions rigorously derived. The general proposition to be drawn from Model II—that simple rules lead to simple, predictable behaviour—is almost surely wrong, and Model III is so complicated that virtually no propositions can be rigorously derived from it at all.....if propositions are not rigorously derived from a model yet receive some evidential support, it is difficult to know what one should learn from empirical corroboration. We may learn something about the propositions; but lacking any logical relationships between them and the model, the empirical test teaches us little about the model or the hunch that originally generated it (Bendor and Hammond 1992: 319).*

The second problem is that the models are so complex and include so many variables, that they are not able to be tested in any real sense, and thus they lack predictive power. Bernstein points to the “numbered propositions, and often many segments under each proposition, thus betokening systematic analysis, near science and rigour” (Bernstein 2000: 5), while Steele cites the “mania for categorization that is the bane of the social scientist” (Steele 1972: 43). Nevertheless, the difficulty of fitting any of them into the typology identified by Bendor and Hammond cited shows that, at closer inspection, the models are rather jumbled.

Model I might seem the easiest to assess, but the second edition’s concessions to allow the rational actors to have multiple goals and to allow that rational decisions can be made within the framework of imperfect information and cultural, electoral or generational constructs of reality (that is, a bounded rational framework) mean that the model’s simplicity is undermined by the large number of variables, and unknowns.

Model II by the same token, examines the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of government agencies, but there are numerous variables about why one SOP might be

chosen over another, about when an SOP delivers a good outcome in one case and when it delivers a foul-up in another, about the complexity of joint action when SOPs interact, and about the differentiated role of SOPs in the provision of information before a decision, the making of a decision itself and the implementation of that decision. Welch notes that “routines” are not a useful analytic category. “They cannot be said to have uniform characteristics or pervasive or systemic effects on which to build powerful theories of state behaviour” (Welch 1992: 127). Bendor and Hammond cite the analogy of a chess game, with only six different kinds of pieces each with a limited number of moves (or routines) there are nevertheless estimated to be  $10^{120}$  different sequences of play possible: a number so large as to be infinite. They argue that the “combinatorial effects” that create enormous complexity in a simple chess game create endless complexity in the real world (Bendor and Hammond 1992: 310). If a reality of incremental decision making rather than a crisis situation is accepted, then the ability to separate out all these variables and determine which will carry the day becomes impossible. In all, it is simply not possible to predict what will be decided simply by acknowledging that organisational processes will be behind many key decisions.

This complexity is especially true for Model III. Governmental politics can be expanded to include not only the bureaucratic or organizational role of each governmental ‘player’, but also his or her personality and values, his or her personal and organisational agenda(s) and the players’ perceptions of political acceptability of each decision. The number of players also must be broadened if a realistic assessment of ‘politics’ is to be made, to bring in not only elected Ministers and senior civil servants but also staffers and Ministerial advisers, the media, others members of the legislative and officials from the Ministers’ political parties. Finally Model III is required to factor in the decision making processes, timeframes and ‘action-channels’, and the role of ‘groupthink’. The model thus becomes a ‘catch all’ for so many variables that it makes it impossible to predict outcomes. Art calls it “sloppy, vague and imprecise” (Art 1973: 486).

Earnest Yanarella argues that Allison is caught between two aims. On one hand Allison hopes to use his models to prove things in a positivist way, in a “reconstructed style of analysis drawn from the physical sciences”, where he seeks empirical proof of

the cause of decision. On the other hand, Allison is presenting the models as a “logic-in-use” manner: that is, Allison is examining and exposing other analysts’ assumptions when they explain decisions. Yanarella argues that Allison is much better at the second aim, and “virtually all that stands in the way of Allison’s grasping of the full import of the implications of his own research praxis is his persisting, but largely empty, loyalty to the philosophy of science, which obscures his own research activity and sets forth contradictory and unrealizable criteria for evaluating explanation in the study of foreign policy” (Yanarella 1975: 172).

While there may be internal theoretical flaws within and between the models, this does not necessarily take away from the value of Allison’s framework as a prompt to better and more full description of factors behind government decision. The detailed explanation of the problems with Allison’s approach presented in this thesis should not be taken as suggesting that the models are not worth using. Welch notes “the overwhelming majority of studies involving the bureaucratic politics paradigm as their particular ‘conceptual lens’ have as their objective the elucidation of the ways in which different players and organisations actually interact in a given circumstance....Concrete descriptions of bureaucratic politics have their value. They enable us to understand how and why governments make decisions in particular cases” (Welch 1992: 137). Welch also suggests that Allison’s efforts may well be credited with drawing our attention to the fact that there is room for creative theory-building at the intra-governmental level of analysis (Welch 1992: 141). Snyder and Diesing contend that descriptions of internal bargaining are a useful addition to theories based on external bargaining between states “If the analyst knows something about the distribution of internal attitudes and influence, he can explain and predict the outcome of bargaining episodes between states in greater detail and within narrower limits than would be possible with bargaining theory alone” (Snyder and Diesing 1977: 245).

The problem remains, though, that Allison’s specific models are poor tools for predicting decision. Ball says “it is possible to describe the bureaucratic posturing elaborately and at length but that doesn’t explain the actual outcome” (Ball 1974: 91). Welch argues that “concrete descriptions of bureaucratic politics ... do not in themselves constitute theoretical progress” (Welch 1992: 137), and suggests instead the development

of a paradigm which concentrates the analyst's attention on the effects of organisational complexity and that permits the formulation and testing of a body of theory from which predictions could be made. (Welch 1992: 140–1)<sup>21</sup>.

## ***Using Allison's approach for a New Zealand case study***

Given that Allison's theoretical framework is generally considered important and insightful, albeit flawed, with respect to analysis of American foreign policy decision making, it is useful to ask whether it has wider application to political systems outside the USA, and whether studying a different political system increases or decreases the usefulness of the three models. Allison himself argues that the main tenets of the models can be applied to other national systems (Allison 1971: 182–3). This contention is supported by Morton Halperin, the other major proponent of bureaucratic politics (Halperin 1974: 311–12).

Canadian academic Kim Richard Nossal has sought to test this assumption by analysing the Canadian foreign policy decision-making process with the bureaucratic politics framework. (Nossal 1979; Nossal 1989; Hatley and Nossal 2004). While seeing the methodology as useful, Nossal nevertheless argues that “the characteristics that make bureaucratic politics an important feature of foreign policy making in the United States are not found to the same extent or degree in other national systems” (Nossal 1989: 232). Nossal identifies the following key differences between United States and Canadian bureaucratic politics; first, the Canadian system is marked by greater functional overlap between the government departments which increasingly share jurisdiction for foreign policy and between which there are increasingly formal standing or ad hoc interdepartmental consultation processes. Secondly, Nossal argues that a premium is placed on coordination of policy so “the outcomes of a policy process that is marked by

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<sup>21</sup> Welch suggests this could study, for example, relationships between language congruity (the degree to which the meaning that two organisations attach to words match), and the ability of two organizations to communicate or cooperate effectively, between the number of organisations involved in a decision and the degree to which their behaviour reflects the intentions and serves the purposes of national leaders, and between the attention leaders pay to details of implementation and the degree to which organizational behaviour reflects their intent. Welch, D. A. (1992). "The Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms: Retrospect and Prospect." *International Security* 17(2).

both structure and conscious effort to coordinate are highly sensitive to bureaucratic politics” (Nossal 1979: 619). Over the long haul, “coordination can become synonymous with compromise” as there are risks in overt conflict on any one issue. This means the bureaucratic politics are not eliminated, but rather, muted. Third, Nossal points to the power of the central agencies in a Westminster system: in Canada’s case, the Privy Council Office<sup>22</sup>. Nossal argues that “central agencies are likelier to register more wins than losses if only because of the poor bargaining position of program departments. Their dependence on central agents for their organizational health is one important factor; their lack of retaliatory resources is another” (Nossal 1979: 621). Fourth, Nossal argues that the senior civil service in Canada is cohesive due to the similar backgrounds of the career civil servants, the fact that they are nearly all long serving and politically neutral and perhaps also due to Canada’s relative smaller size. He notes the observation of cohesiveness has also been made of the British system, and cites Heclo and Wildavsky’s study of the ‘Mandarins of Whitehall’ who demonstrate a ‘coherence and continuity unknown in the United States’. Nossal argues that “while senior officials [in Ottawa] will try to get their policy preferences accepted, will try to enhance the interests of their organisation and will try to exert personal influence, it is unlikely that one will see the kind of open warfare evident in Washington. Similarly, cohesiveness has an impact on outcomes: compromise is more willingly sought as an acceptable solution to interdepartmental differences” (Nossal 1979: 622–23).

Nossal’s other key area of difference relates to Cabinet and its processes. He notes that senior officials can attend Cabinet Committee meetings, meaning an “institutionalised interchange between ministers and mandarins” where both nevertheless “recognise the hierarchy in their respective positions” (Nossal 1979: 623).

Nevertheless, Nossal argues that the differences do not mean a bureaucratic politics is not useful for analysing decisions under the Westminster system. “Just because the analyst does not observe conflict does not mean that the participants in the decision-making process, both political and bureaucratic, were all agreed on ends and means and

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<sup>22</sup> In New Zealand, the ‘central agencies’ are the Prime Minister’s Office, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury and the State Services Commission. (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade can also have a brokering, or ‘central agency’ function for foreign policy matters.)

had developed a unanimous conception of the national interest” (Nossal 1989: 233). He points out that Cabinet itself, with its focus on collective decision making and collective responsibility, does not in fact represent an elimination of bureaucratic politics, but rather a different forum for the playing out of the political game, albeit one hidden from the public view.

*The collectivity should not be regarded as a unitary actor, but as thirty men and women who bring into the Cabinet room their own parochial perceptions and priorities, shaped by their portfolios, the demands of their electoral and regional constituencies, the imperatives of their relations with their departmental officials and their own ambitions within Cabinet. Nor are the thirty members equal in influence or positional authority; there will be a hierarchy of influence and effectiveness with the prime minister usually at the apex. The effectiveness of each minister will be determined by his portfolio, his closeness to the prime minister, and his relations with his colleagues. Unless a minister is able to convince his confrères to allow him latitude over an issue area, even though they may not be convinced of a proposal or its consequences, it is likely that Cabinet decisions will be marked by the ‘pulling and hauling’ associated with Allison’s paradigm (Nossal 1979: 624).*

Nossal concludes that five generalizations can be drawn about the applicability of the bureaucratic politics approach in parliamentary systems:

- *The more jurisdictions (departmental or intergovernmental) overlap, the more likely will outcomes be the result of bargaining and compromise among players.*
- *The greater the effort to coordinate (by interdepartmental committees, central agencies or Cabinet itself) the more the outcomes will reflect compromise and a melding of divergent interests.*
- *The greater the power, influence or authority of the central agencies, the more will outcomes be the result of bargaining, arbitration or mediation, often at the expense of the program departments.*
- *The more cohesive the upper level of bureaucratic structure, the more likely will compromise be actively pursued by actors at that level.*
- *Outcomes of deliberations in plenary cabinet or its committees will not be the result of collective choice rationally arrived at, but will be a ‘resultant’ determined by the effectiveness of ministers in attempting to secure acceptance and approval of their preference (Nossal 1979: 625).*



Drawing on Allison's critics and also on Nossal's application of the bureaucratic politics approach to a parliamentary system, there are several key points to consider when using the *Essence of Decision* models for a study of New Zealand foreign policy. First, it is important to distil the general theoretical propositions about government decision-making of the three models from those aspects that relate specifically to the decision making processes of the USA. Secondly, the models are complex and their categories and sub categories are hard for the analyst to process, and several specific propositions are contested. Analysts therefore must use the Models in a rather more general and condensed way. Practical application of Allison's models requires simplification of them, which in turn may mean an understatement or overstatement of elements in them. Third, any analysis needs to take into account decision making over time, given that a distinct and easily defined case study such as the 13 days of the Cuban missile crisis is a rare occurrence. Allison's framework needs to be tested for decision making on foreign policy issues with less clear boundaries both intra-nationally and inter-nationally. Fourth, the three models are premised on the decision-making state being a superpower with the ability to influence the course of world affairs—i.e. the USA. Smaller states such as New Zealand are likely to have a much more 'penetrated' foreign policy where international influences impact directly on governmental policy. They are also less able to implement any decision unilaterally. Finally, both the organisational behaviour and bureaucratic politics models point to the complexity of joint action, but they do not say specifically how this impacts on decisions, other than to say that the result may not be what leaders intended. The specific ways in which the complexity of joint action impacts on government decisions and decision-making processes is a key area of study for any research which aims to look at New Zealand's involvement in complex peace support missions.

Using the rational actor model to examine the case study of this thesis, the New Zealand intervention in East Timor would be seen as a discreet decision, in each case made by a rational cohesive government. Questions that might be examined in exploring these interventions using this model might include: What were New Zealand's direct interests in East Timor? What were New Zealand's interests in working alongside Australia? What were New Zealand's interests in being seen as a good international

citizen, through peace keeping and humanitarian interventions? To what extent did our participation further these interests? Was there a coherent strategy for New Zealand's engagement? With the benefit of hindsight, can the government's decisions be explained as demonstrating pursuit of the national interest?

Under an organisational behaviour paradigm, an analysis of New Zealand's involvement in East Timor might look at, for example the specific organisational missions, cultures and routines of the New Zealand Defence Force, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the New Zealand Police, The New Zealand Customs service, the Department of Corrections and the New Zealand Agency for International Development, and how these were demonstrated by action on the ground in East Timor. An analysis should also cover the politically-driven organisational change at the time, and its impact on these pre-existing routines (especially in Defence and NZAID), the relative importance of institutional relationships with other countries' institutions (e.g. NZDF-ADF relations, NZ Corrections-East Timor Prison Service relations) and the extent to which changes in agreed outcomes and funding for government departments changed during the period (including requirements to work more closely together in a Whole of Government way) affected their agendas, cultures and behaviour. The analysis should also cover the extent to which, with the benefit of hindsight, the government's decisions can be seen as reflecting the agendas of the government departments rather than any coherent pursuit of government policy or national interest

A governmental politics analysis of the nature of New Zealand interventions might explore how short term intervention became longer term projects, how bureaucratic agendas and Ministerial ambitions overlapped or conflicted, the dynamics of the group decision-making processes used, the personalities of key leaders, the characteristics of the political parties in government at the time, the impact of other domestic issues and international issues at the time on the specific interventions, and whether, with hindsight, the bureaucratic 'pulling and hauling can be shown to be the crucial determinant of government action.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter has sought to present the case for using Allison's framework for this thesis, by stressing the centrality of Allison's work in mainstream academic thinking about decision-making. It has then sought to evaluate Allison's approach from a theoretical point of view, and to finally consider whether it is a useful approach for analysing New Zealand decisions.

The conclusion after this theoretical assessment is that Allison's models are useful but flawed. The usefulness of Allison's models in the first instance is in their ability to "shine light on the same object from different angles" (Welch 1992: 142). For the case study of a series of New Zealand foreign policy decisions, the models are likely to highlight a range of issues otherwise neglected by historians and political scientists alike. This could have useful implications for policy makers seeking to examine how to make better decisions. Nevertheless, a survey of the literature written about Allison's models and their internal logic suggests that they may not necessarily offer any particularly concrete predictions for future government decisions. The following three chapters of this thesis will attempt to take the models and test them against a practical case study of New Zealand foreign policy decision making. In the conclusion, we will return to the theoretical analysis, as well as the practical testing of the models, and will evaluate the overall value of Allison's work for this project.

## Chapter Two: New Zealand involvement in East Timor using a Rational Actor Model

Allison's first model posits the state as a unitary rational actor. In this chapter, we seek to use Allison's model to evaluate New Zealand's involvement in East Timor from 2000 to 2002 by first identifying the players, identifying what they perceived as the 'problem', and then highlighting what were considered to be the key interests to be pursued. Using Allison's rational analysis model, the Government action is seen as a direct output of the cost-benefit equations to achieve maximum value in the national interest. The chapter attempts to show the value, and weaknesses of viewing the case study in this way. There is plenty of evidence to support this model of analysis, not least because much of the archival evidence and academic and strategic writing tends to assume implicitly the rational actor model.

An analysis using Allison's organising concepts for Model I takes as read that the "players" are nation-states. In the East Timor case study used here, the main player is New Zealand, with Australia, Portugal, the UN, the East Timorese featuring also as players.

The rational actor model implies that the analyst treats the state as a unitary actor, when it is self-evident that states are made up of disparate communities and interests. Nevertheless criticizing the assumption of state unitary for its own sake is somewhat limiting; as Bendor and Hammond note "many abstract analyses require treating an aggregation of human beings as a single unit. For some purposes such aggregation is useful and appropriate" (Bendor and Hammond 1992: 305). Allison's Model I paradigm works on the basis that aggregation is assumed. The model then uses this assumed aggregation of interests to assume a common definition of the problem and agreement about what to do about it. Since the Model posits that action is taken on a rational basis, it presupposes that there will be a common acceptance of that action.

## ***States as unitary actors***

There is a good case to be made that New Zealand did indeed act as a unitary rational actor with respect to East Timor. There was, for example, a widely shared perception that the involvement was the right thing to do, evidenced by the fact that there was not widespread criticism of the involvement in the media or in parliament. This point was reinforced in Ministerial statements and speeches (Burton 2000a; Burton 2000c; Clark 2000d; Clark 2000a). Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Phil Goff, speaking to a New Zealand Institute of International Affairs conference on East Timor in 2000 said “action to come to the assistance of East Timor was unanimously supported across all parties in parliament and received overwhelming public support” (Goff 2000a). Officials also saw general agreement on the East Timor engagement within the government. As one official suggested “we [officials] were pushing through an open door—it was easy to get more money. We didn’t need to persuade Ministers” [Confidential interview 4]. The same official noted that at Cabinet committees where the deployment was discussed, the only debate was about clarifying exact costs, rather than over the fact of the deployment, its scope or duration. The official said “all the Ministers and the Prime Minister agreed with the policy” [Confidential interview 4]. Another official concurred with this assessment, saying that “by and large everyone was on the same page” [Confidential interview 1].

If a case can be made that New Zealand policy was formed in a reasonably unitary way, what then can be said of the other players with whom New Zealand interacted? Other countries that had impact were Australia and Indonesia primarily, but also the USA, ASEAN members, Japan, South Korea and Portugal. While it is outside of the scope of this thesis to examine in detail the internal dynamics within these countries, it is important to note that intra-national divisions within each country did not feature significantly in reporting from diplomatic posts in their capitals on the East Timor issue from 2000–2002, even in reporting from Indonesia which had been through a turbulent political upheaval and where internal divisions had featured prominently on most issues.

<sup>23</sup>This apparent coherence in views of other states is in contrast, for example, to reporting on aspects of the intervention in Solomon Islands after June 2003, where differing departmental viewpoints within Australia, for example, figured significantly within the diplomatic correspondence.

A unitary rational actor model was, in policy documents at least, also routinely applied to large international organisations and UNTAET in particular. While former UNTAET participants such as Jarat Chopra suggest UNTAET was anything but internally unified in its views (Chopra 2000; Chopra 2002), nevertheless, UNTAET was a single entity, being a mandated administration with a clear hierarchy. UNTAET's mandate vested executive authority in the Special Representative of the Secretary General, and the SRSG appointed a Cabinet and established an administration, so UNTAET effectively functioned as an appointed government. This meant that it was possible for New Zealand officials to preserve the semblance that they were dealing with a unitary rational actor in the form of the Transitional Administration. UNTAET's views were sought on all manner of bilateral issues, especially those concerning development. Although there were frequent gaps and divisions between UNTAET and the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York, UNDPKO quickly began to defer much of the day to day decision to the Transitional Administrator Sergio Viera de Mello.

Viewing the East Timorese leadership as an actor within a rational framework was problematic given the East Timorese power factions and their inexperience in the ways of working as anything like a coherent government within the unitary nation state model. During 1999, the key representative organisation for the East Timorese was the CNRT: the National Council for the Timorese Resistance, headed by Xanana Gusmao, who was until September 1999 held in prison in Jakarta. CNRT established domestic portfolios and assigned leadership positions, and also established an international network. Nevertheless at no stage was CNRT the legitimate "government" of transitional East Timor. This proved problematic for New Zealand, especially when CNRT leader and Massey University post-graduate student Jorge Teme asserted that the CNRT was the "shadow government of East Timor" and that he was its "representative" in

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<sup>23</sup> Reporting came from Jakarta, Canberra, Washington, Rome (covering Portugal) and ASEAN capitals as well as New York and some European posts.

New Zealand. Teme asked for formal recognition of himself as CNRT representative, funding from NZ for his work, and a diplomatic visa—his implication seemed to be that he should be treated as the ‘partner’ for discussions of New Zealand government policy towards East Timor (MFAT Archives 1999b; MFAT Archives 1999a). After some internal discussion, MFAT’s Senior Adviser of East Timor Julie McKenzie recommended that New Zealand “take the lead from UNTAET” on such matters but “not without some recognition of CNRT’s role”. Teme was in the event never accorded any official status by New Zealand, and a submission was made to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade by MFAT on 22 December 1999 suggesting that diplomatic relations with UNTAET be established quickly: in the first instance by an expanded programme of visits from Wellington and Jakarta (MFAT Archives 1999c). In the meantime, personal linkages between New Zealand Ministers and CNRT leaders Gusmao and Jose Ramos-Horta were fostered.

A rational actor analysis might suggest that absent a bilateral relationship based on equally unitary nation state governments, the views and interests of the East Timorese leadership might have played little role in New Zealand foreign policy formulation. The inference from this is that unless there is a unitary national actor with which to work, an interest group is discounted. The archival evidence suggests that certainly, the mandated administration UNTAET was the preferred partner for all bureaucratic decisions, and UNTAET’s requests determined, for the most part, the shape and scope of New Zealand’s military, police and ODA contributions. While the archives also show consistent efforts to ascertain what the various East Timorese factions wanted and efforts by New Zealand Ministers and officials to continue to consult closely with the East Timorese leaders, it is not clear that the views of these constituencies impacted on specific decisions about New Zealand government action.

### ***The ‘problem’ of East Timor***

Once the ‘players’ have been identified, the second organising concept of the rational actor model is the definition of the ‘problem’ to be solved. In the case of East Timor, there was some scope for debate about this. For example, there was a debate about the exact nature of the threat from Indonesia and the militias in 1999 (New Zealand Institute

of International Affairs. 2000; Reid 2000). However by the time UNTAET was firmly in place, the nature of the ‘problem’ was not widely contested within New Zealand or indeed within the UN. All agreed that East Timor needed to build a new nation. This meant creating a government structure from scratch, preparing East Timor to take its place as an independent nation in the Asia-Pacific region, rebuilding its physical infrastructure, securing its longer term economic development prospects and repatriating from West Timor the 200,000 refugees. This nation-building required an ongoing security presence as well as international assistance for every possible sector. Another key requirement was to seek justice for the crimes committed in 1999—something that was not without its own controversial implications, given that the nascent East Timorese leadership recognised that effective cooperation with Indonesia would be essential for the survival of the new state. The ‘problem’, then, was well captured by UNTAET’s mandate (UNSC 1999). There was debate within UN circles about whether the requirement for the UN to act as executive government conflicted with the requirement to build the capacity for self government. This centred on the civilian administration components of UNTAET and whether the UN mission was successful in its mandated task of nation-building. This debate has been echoed in the academic literature (Chopra 2000; Traub 2000; Beauvais 2001; Chesterman 2001; Kondoch 2001; Caplan 2002; Chopra 2002; Gorjao 2002; Steele 2002; Kreilkamp 2003; Goldstone 2004). Although many of the criticisms of UNTAET’s civilian administration generally could be seen as applicable to the New Zealand Police, Correction, Customs and other non-military deployments, nevertheless this debate only impacted on New Zealand’s foreign policy decisions indirectly. This was because in general, the UN staffed and managed its civilian component through recruitment in New York, or by UNTAET head quarters, rather than via specific contributions from nation states, and also because the UNTAET Governance and Public Administration Division decided the policy on “Timorization”.

An additional aspect of the ‘problem’, about which there could have been scope for more debate, was the sense that East Timor could become a threat to regional peace and security if it was not supported. This was an early version of the “failed state” discourse that would come to prominence after September 11 2001 and be emphasised much more when the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands was deployed in



2003<sup>24</sup>. Although this characterisation of the ‘problem’ did appear in the 2000 Cabinet paper East Timor: Future Directions and in government speeches after September 11 2001, at the time that the East Timor deployment was being designed, it is hard to imagine this was a main driver for action (MFAT Archives 2000a). Indonesia had effectively withdrawn from direct involvement in East Timor, and during the period 2000–2002 showed an increasing distance even from the militias who controlled the refugee camps in West Timor. Threat of the territory being used as a terrorist base seemed remote at best, even after September 2001. The East Timorese themselves were in no position to attack or destabilise any other country. The threat to regional stability from ongoing militia activity was also remote: while there was fear that militias undermining East Timor from across the border with Indonesia would constitute a regional security threat, there did not seem to be any fear that this would be ‘contagious’. Moreover several ASEAN countries that had previously ignored the issue as a domestic concern for Indonesia were subsequently involved in the UN mission as troop and police contributing nations.

## ***The national interests at stake***

The third of Allison’s organising concepts for the rational actor model is defining the interests and preferences of the players. This requires a clear set of objectives, a clear set of options for advancing these objectives, a good understanding of the consequences of taking each option and then the making of a choice which maximises the value for New Zealand by securing the best consequences.

While East Timor might not be a typical candidate for a close direct bilateral relationship, it was nevertheless of the highest foreign policy priority to the Labour Alliance government. In Helen Clark’s speech from the throne at the opening of parliament directly after the election in 1999 it was the only country to be named in the speech’s short reference to foreign policy (Clark 1999). Subsequent speeches as well as

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<sup>24</sup> With the heightened concern about terrorism also came a concern about ‘failed states’ such as Afghanistan, which, due to weak governance, might become breeding grounds for terrorism. In 2003 the influential Australian think tank the Australian Strategic Policy Institute recommended Australia intervene in Solomon Islands on the grounds that it could be a “Petri dish” for transnational crime and terrorism. See ASPI Report “Our Failing Neighbour; Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands” June 2003.

the 2000 Cabinet paper *East Timor: Future Directions* suggest that the key New Zealand interests in the relationship were as follows:

**Regional security:** New Zealand wanted to be seen as a constructive player in regional security issues in the Asia-Pacific region, and as part of this, in particular wanted to demonstrate a close and productive security relationship with Australia. In political-theoretical terms, this could be seen as a realist position: New Zealand made a calculated judgment that its own security was threatened by instability in its immediate area and so sought to contain this threat, through military intervention, and through a strong and durable alliance with Australia as well as through defence partnerships with Pacific and ASEAN countries.

**Multilateralism:** New Zealand wished to underline its consistent support for multilateralism championed by the UN in general and UN peacekeeping in particular, as well as New Zealand's long standing interest in international human rights. In political-theoretical terms this is both a classic liberal position—that is, a belief that multilateral institutions hold the key to cooperation for the greater global good and are the key to long term peace—and a realist view that multilateral institutions and the rule of international law best protects the interests of smaller and weaker states such as New Zealand.<sup>25</sup>

**Humanitarianism:** New Zealand wanted to help alleviate the suffering of the Timorese people, support the principle of self determination and the achievement of social and economic development for East Timor. This too is an expression of a liberal or idealist rationalism: a belief that through assistance from developed and stable countries to the world's least fortunate countries, global peace will be maintained. It is a less self-interested liberalism than a simple belief in multilateralism, which can be argued in national interest, rather than humanitarian terms. Human rights can be included as a key tenet of this argument—rights are considered the starting point for development. Likewise a humanitarian rationale need not neglect security concerns, but it would see these in terms of the 'human security' of communities affected by conflict, rather than the stability or security of nations or regions.

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<sup>25</sup> McGraw, D. (2005). "New Zealand Foreign Policy under the Clark Government: High Tide of Liberal Internationalism." *Pacific Affairs* 78(2): 217 - 236.

**Domestic electoral popularity:** The Labour-Alliance government wished to use the East Timor deployment to project a sense of national confidence and to speak to several electoral constituencies at the same time. For example, East Timor was used as evidence of the value of the Clark Government's realignment of Defence expenditure away from strike aircraft towards peacekeeping and the Army in particular (thus addressing the criticism that had come from the right wing, pro defence lobby that the Clark Government was anti-militarist) while at the same time, demonstrating support for a left wing cause. East Timor self determination, which had been previously downplayed as part of the *realpolitik* of the bilateral relationship with Indonesia.

Ministerial speeches and press statements during the period 2000–2002 gave all of the first three rationales as reasons for New Zealand's involvement in East Timor, with the justification often calibrated depending on the Minister and the audience. Regional stability featured prominently. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Phil Goff, for example, said in a press statement in early 2000 that “the transition to independence in East Timor has allowed New Zealand to demonstrate its capacity and commitment to contribute to the promotion of regional stability, be that through aid, political or military means” (Goff 2000c). In a speech in Washington later that year, Goff said “there is an expectation in the South West Pacific and beyond that New Zealand and Australia should carry the burden for security responses and assistance. That is a responsibility we accept” (Goff 2000b). Minister of Defence Mark Burton also said in early 2000 that “East Timor has reinforced... the important and constructive role our Defence Force can play in promoting global security” (Burton 2000b).

Goff, Burton and Prime Minister Helen Clark all reinforced in various public statements the importance of the defence and security relationship with Australia, which from a New Zealand perspective, can be seen as part of the same ‘regional security’—i.e. realist—rubric. The “spirit of the ANZAC tradition” was hailed often, and Mark Burton made reference to “a positive and fruitful defence relationship with our closest neighbour” (Burton 2000a). Sometimes, Australian approval of New Zealand efforts was cited as a driver for deployment decisions e.g. Helen Clark stated in December 2000 that “Australian Prime Minister John Howard has told me that Australia would greatly appreciate an extended NZDF presence [in East Timor]” (Clark 2000c). That this desire

to cement close defence relationships came within a regional security rationale was made clear by Mark Burton, speaking in Darwin in November 2002, as the last New Zealand battalion was withdrawn; “Our combined efforts in Timor-Leste confirm that we share a common commitment to the security and stability of the Asia Pacific. The Timor-Leste deployment underlines the ability of the Australian Defence Force and the New Zealand Defence Force to work together effectively in an operational environment” (Burton 2002c). In part, the emphasis on Australian views also served to dampen criticism that Australia, our only ally, viewed New Zealand as not pulling its weight in Defence matters. In a speech to the Institute of International Affairs in June 2000 Foreign Minister Phil Goff explicitly addressed this aspect:

*Across the board in East Timor, the Australians acknowledged the size and timing of the intervention by the kiwis. The cooperation between the New Zealand and Australian forces, following the joint operation earlier in Bougainville, in many respects emphasised the best of the ANZAC tradition. For the time being at least, the criticism by Australian commentators that New Zealand is not pulling its weight in defence and security of the region had been silenced.” (Goff 2000a).*

Goff went on to mention that the intervention helped New Zealand to look good to the USA and to others:

*[T]he Americans who look to others in regional areas to help settle conflict and achieve regional security, have acknowledged New Zealand’s contribution as have a number of Southeast Asian and North Asian nations (Goff 2000a).*

Likewise, the close defence relationships with Singapore and its operational expression through cooperation in East Timor was underlined in Ministerial statements, and regional security was again cited as the key driver for this effort. In March 2001, Mark Burton commended the Singapore government for “its commitment to regional security and peace” (Burton 2001a).

The commitment to multilateralism, and the belief that it provides the best prospects for New Zealand’s security, also found regular expression in Ministerial explanations for the deployment to East Timor. Indeed, in her speech from the throne at

the opening of parliament in 1999, new Prime Minister Helen Clark made only one comment on foreign policy which was to say

*New Zealand's security in the world requires the most effective use of our diplomacy and limited capacity to support international peacemaking and peacekeeping. My government sees New Zealand's role as being primarily to assist the United Nations in the latter endeavours and looks forward to assisting the United Nations Constitutional Administration [sic] in East Timor in this regard (Clark 1999).*

This sentiment was repeated many times, most often by Helen Clark and Phil Goff: e.g. Phil Goff said in September 2000 that East Timor was evidence of “our commitment to collective security” (Goff 2000b) and in a speech in October that year, he said “New Zealand has shown by its actions its commitment to the principles [of the UN] through its current involvement in East Timor” (Goff 2000d). Five months later, in March 2001, Helen Clark underlined this sentiment, saying the involvement “shows out strong support for the UN as the primary guarantor of international security” (Clark 2001).

The praise received from the UN for New Zealand's work was widely reported in press statements throughout the period 2000–2002, with comments from the aid Minister Matt Robson along the lines of “NZ praised by UN in Timor” and “the UN and the people of East Timor owe a profound debt of gratitude to all New Zealanders” (Robson 2000e) and from Defence Minister Mark Burton that “the value that the UN places on this contribution is something all New Zealanders can be proud of” (Burton 2001b). Perhaps the most often quoted praise was UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's comment that New Zealand was “a model UN member”.

The argument that New Zealand's deployment was based primarily on a humanitarian desire to help the East Timorese probably finds the strongest of support from a survey of government public statements in 2000–2002. Phil Goff in January 2000 stated this explicitly in early 2000 that “New Zealand's interest in East Timor is primarily driven by the humanitarian situation there” (Goff 2000c). Aid Minister Matt Robson, not surprisingly, also consistently portrayed the New Zealand contribution in terms of rebuilding East Timor (Robson 2000d; Robson 2000c; Robson 2000a; Robson 2000b;

Robson 2001a; Robson 2001b). Robson stated in June 2001 that he had told East Timorese transitional administration Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta that “New Zealand is in there for the long haul”. While such comments might be expected within the context of statements about development assistance, the focus on rebuilding was also a theme in the statements of Defence Minister Mark Burton, who stated repeatedly that New Zealand’s role was to “protect the democratic rights of a people who have suffered so much in their struggle toward nationhood.” (The phrase appears, for example, in Burton 2000d; Burton 2001c; Burton 2002d; Burton 2002a; Burton 2002b).

Coming with this commitment to humanitarianism also came a sense of obligation to the Timorese, following from a belief that New Zealand had been earlier complicit in East Timor’s troubles. Both Phil Goff and Matt Robson suggested that New Zealand involvement in 2000–2002 was influenced by a failure to speak out in 1975 against the Indonesian occupation. At the time of the release of papers outlining events of 1975, Goff called the East Timor commitment post-1999 “compensation” (Goff 2002b).

Matt Robson made his views in favour of a humanitarian justification especially explicit in a speech in February 2001, where he rejected an argument in favour of regional stability which he saw as being linked with a neglect for human rights:

*Attention to human rights addresses one of the most pervasive of all the root causes of disputes. In spite of that, one well known commentator on strategic affairs warned, last year, against scrutinising Indonesia’s range of problems “solely through the monocle of human rights”...As one retired military officer recently wrote to me, the idea was “maintaining a credible relationship with current and potential allies”.*

*The New Zealand government, for almost all the time that the people of East Timor were struggling for independence, accepted that advice. To its shame.*

*The previous government looked at regional security through “a monocle of stability”. Suharto gave Indonesia stability but where are his former admirers now? Of course stability and security are not mutually exclusive but they are not the same thing....*

*The cry for human rights comes not from the State but from the people, and by and large, from the under-privileged. It is not at all surprising to me that centre-left and centre-right governments in New Zealand have different perceptions on these matters (Robson 2001c).*

While the pursuit of domestic electoral popularity is not often made explicit (unsurprisingly) in Ministerial speeches and statements, the grouping of issues nevertheless shows that the Clark-led Government was clearly using the deployment to answer criticism that it was ‘soft’ on defence. Prime Minister Helen Clark, in a speech to the Returned Services Association National Council Meeting said

*Recently our Defence Force has acquitted itself well in East Timor—in spite of its ancient equipment. Our aim is to do what we do well even better.*

*I saw some suggestion in the RSA annual report that our army might be trained for peacekeeping rather than combat capability. Let me assure you now that we will continue to train for combat capability, knowing that those skills are basic for any army force deployment (Clark 2000b).*

The linking of the military success in East Timor with the wisdom of the defence capability review (which entailed the cancellation of the strike aircraft capability and the provision of new or upgraded equipment for the army, navy and other parts of the Air Force) was a constant theme in the speeches of Defence Minister Mark Burton. At the same time, Matt Robson, and Phil Goff regularly stressed the humanitarian and human rights angles to the deployment (as noted above) to hold off criticism coming primarily from the Green party and some parts of the Alliance party, that funding for the Defence Force should be reduced in favour, perhaps, of increased overseas aid. Phil Goff said in 2000 that the East Timor deployment had effectively silenced this criticism:

*Those on the left of the political spectrum have become converts to the concept of a combat-ready defence force needed to carry out a peacekeeping operation of this nature. There are clearly occasions when military capability is needed to achieve peace and end oppression (Goff 2000a).*

As well as featuring prominently in government public statements, the national interests of regional security, multilateralism and humanitarianism were set out in an explicit way in the 2000 Cabinet paper “East Timor Future Directions”<sup>26</sup> (MFAT Archives 2000a). The paper cited that the first cluster of New Zealand interest could

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<sup>26</sup> Cabinet papers are drafted by civil servants for a lead Minister. They are required to be shared with other government departments (and if necessary, other Ministers) for consultation before they are put to Cabinet by the lead Minister. The 2000 East Timor Future Directions paper was drafted within MFAT—with the first draft written by the New Zealand Ambassador to Indonesia Mike Green. It was then shared with Treasury, NZDF, Customs, Courts and Corrections before being presented to Cabinet.

broadly be categorized as deriving “from our concerns to be a good international citizen”. Under this heading, came both multilateralism and humanitarianism—that is, New Zealand’s participation was “as an interested UN member” and our contributions were “to develop the institutional economic and social capabilities of East Timor and its people”. The second set of interests cited was “our security interest in the wider region of which East Timor is a part”. Under this heading, the strategy goes to some length to explain that while Indonesia’s occupation of the territory was “a point of tension in the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and New Zealand”, it nevertheless did not “draw in non-regional actors or threaten the balance of power or hinder the development of regional cooperation machinery”. However following the 1999 violence, the paper argued, East Timor had become a regional security concern, as the militias “remain a source of ongoing destabilisation”, alongside concerns about “internal non-military security” within East Timor, arising from a likely slow pace of development and of reconciliation between conflicting parties. The strategy, in a form that is prescient of later justifications for the Solomon Islands’ intervention in 2003, also lists “East Timor’s vulnerability to international criminal activities such as drug-running and money laundering” under the rubric of New Zealand’s security interest<sup>27</sup>.

Although Allison’s 1971 version of the rational actor model suggested that states pursue single goals, Allison and Zelikow’s expanded rational actor model in the 1999 edition allows for multiple goals. In the case of the New Zealand deployment to East Timor, none of the interests or goals noted above appears in direct conflict with any of the others: indeed, if we look at domestic electoral concerns we can see that the East Timor issue presented a unique opportunity to reconcile what might have been otherwise conflicting constituencies. Nevertheless there is scope within Model I for a discussion about which of these goals was the most important in the minds of the government decision-makers.

Most of those interviewed for this project believed that humanitarian concerns were the principal drivers for the New Zealand Government. Matt Robson viewed a

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<sup>27</sup> The strategy also addresses the foreign policy interests that were *not* significant in the East Timor relationship; for example, it states clearly that trade and economic interests were not part of the New Zealand national interest in East Timor at the time.



humanitarian /human rights rationale as the key driver, with regional security a rather suspect and right-wing motive. Phil Goff did not make the motives for government action into such an obvious trade-off but his consistent pressure for action on justice and human rights issues shows a clear policy bent towards humanitarianism. Defence Minister Mark Burton likewise stressed primarily the humanitarian justification for the military deployment.

Officials, for their part, also clearly believed that the humanitarian drivers were uppermost in their Ministers' minds. One New Zealand government official commented that the "political interests" of Ministers drove the policy, and that while senior officials tried to stress the regional security angles (e.g. by stressing periodically the greater relative importance of Indonesia for New Zealand's national interests) Ministers were more focused on the narrower issues directly related to the East Timorese [Confidential interview 1]. A senior defence official said "the government was clearly driven to be involved by altruistic and humanitarian reasons. They were passionate about this. They wanted to protect East Timor from Indonesia and its militias" [Confidential interview 5]. Another senior foreign ministry official said, "It always struck me that while we sought to portray New Zealand's involvement as strategic in terms of regional security, the key drivers were in fact humanitarian. The strategic justification was a subsequent rationale. We were working backwards" [Confidential interview 4].

As well as debates about which set of national interest concerns were most important in the minds of the decision-makers, it is also useful to look at how the public expression of these interests (and the balance between them) may have changed over the time period in question. Evidence from speeches suggests that the only major change in the articulation of New Zealand national interests was a refining of the regional security rationale after September 11 2001, so that the terrorist threat and 'failed state' concerns could play a greater role. In an address to the Australian Defence College in August 2002, for example, Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Phil Goff spoke of New Zealand's support for "peacekeeping and regional and international security measures, including the war on terrorism", implicitly merging the multilateral and regional security agenda. He went on to discuss conflict and instability in the South West Pacific and to draw a direct implication from this for New Zealand's own security. "If states fail in the region, this

impacts directly on the well-being of the people of those states and indirectly on the region. The vacuum of authority which results encourages transnational crime including the smuggling of weapons, people and drugs”. Goff then cited involvement in Bougainville, Solomon Islands, East Timor and Fiji as evidence of action on regional conflict issues and state fragility (Goff 2002a). This speech showed a public endorsement of the ‘failed state’ argument which had been expressed in a hesitant way in the 2000 Future Directions paper. Other than this refinement of the regional security argument, the government statements suggest that the conceptualisation of national interests did not change a great deal over the period.

## ***Government decisions explained using a rational actor model***

Given these generally agreed national interests, the government set out making a strategic plan for how they would be pursued in East Timor. The Future Directions paper specified the immediate New Zealand objective for its involvement as contributing to effective decolonisation of East Timor, which was defined as “the establishment of an independent state with some capacity to stand on its own economically, to govern itself effectively and in accordance with good governance principles, and to participate as it sees fit in regional and international affairs” (MFAT Archives 2000a). A secondary New Zealand objective for future involvement was to establish “effective and mutually beneficial relations with the authorities and leadership groups in the new state”. (This latter objective does not make it clear whether “the authorities” refers to the UN administration of UNTAET or to the eventual independent East Timorese government.)

In setting out the actual directions for policy, the 2000 Future Directions strategy suggested that during the “first phase” which is implied to be the period up until independence, the New Zealand objectives will be pursued through monitoring the performance of the UN, building linkages to the future government and shaping assistance to meet Timorese aspirations and priorities. This would be done, the strategy explained, through regular visits by Wellington and Jakarta based officials and the establishment of a liaison office in Dili, through the NZODA programme, and through the engagement by NZDF and other agencies such as Police, Customs, Corrections and

Courts, as part of the UN mission. This latter aspect was qualified: the NZDF presence would be reduced soon, and the other agencies' activities could only provide "windfall" benefits bilaterally for New Zealand (MFAT Archives 2000a).

In a "second phase", the New Zealand objective would be pursued through bilateral relations similar to those which New Zealand has with "many other independent states". The strategy argued that "if contact building in the first phase has been satisfactory, we should have access to the key decision makers in East Timor in order to seek to influence them where we deem that necessary to our national interest". The strategy was silent on whether the kind of relationship envisaged in the future would include a substantial ODA programme or not.

The 2000 Future Directions Strategy also attempted to suggest, in rational actor terms, how the New Zealand engagement would change over time. In particular, the strategy suggested change would be driven by the downsizing of the UN mission and the establishment of an independent East Timorese government. The New Zealand deployment would change, the strategy argued, from a military/UN focused involvement to a diplomatic and ODA focused mission.

The next question for this chapter is whether the resulting New Zealand government action in East Timor can be fully explained in rational terms as following directly from the stated interests and stated means of achieving them. Once interests and objectives for a decision (or set of decisions) have been identified, the test for the rational actor model becomes whether or not the resulting government action in the case study in question can be seen to have followed logically from the stated interests.

The stated interests and objectives for the overall relationship were set out in the 2000 Strategy, and for the most part, a sound case can be made that Government action followed as a result of these specified directions. The shape of New Zealand involvement did change from a UN focused involvement with a strong military aspect, to a diplomatic and ODA focused relationship. By late 2001 the New Zealand Police and Customs deployments, as part of the UN, were over and the bulk of the Corrections deployment had wound down. The last Corrections officers left in April 2002. East Timor was handed over from the UN to the elected Timorese Government on 20 May 2002 and in

November 2002 the New Zealand UN Peacekeeping Force battalion withdrew from Cova Lima District, to be replaced by the Thai battalion. In parallel, a bilateral ODA agreement for five years was concluded in 2001, leaving the ODA programme as the major component in the bilateral relationship. The New Zealand office in Dili was converted to a Consulate-General in May 2002. These resulting actions can be explained by suggesting that while the regional security and multilateralism drivers were important, these were less significant over the longer term than a humanitarian concern for the East Timorese people, which is why the diplomatic and ODA relationship in the end was the most enduring element of government action.

While this does seem on the surface a satisfactory demonstration of the explanatory power of the Rational Actor Model, it only works at a very general level. In the strategy for example, key issues were left deliberately vague: no timeframes were given for the move from the UN focus to ‘normal’ bilateral relations and no template for “normal bilateral relations” was given. The fudge is clear in the fact that no indicative funding levels are specified for future involvement.

The specified interests also do not sufficiently explain government decisions on New Zealand’s relationship with East Timor. The importance of a strong and enduring bilateral diplomatic relationship with the East Timorese, for example, may have been important to Ministers but it was rejected in the Future Directions strategy in favour of a focus on regional, multilateral and humanitarian motives. The strategy noted in its summary that “the lack of historical ties between New Zealand and East Timorese, particularly in contrast to our South Pacific neighbours, suggests the bilateral relationship will be friendly but not the most strategic”. In the text of the strategy, it is noted that relations will be similar to those New Zealand has with “many other small independent states”. Perhaps implicit here was that the relationship might look similar to relationships with other smaller Asian countries e.g. Nepal, Bhutan, Brunei, where there are few Ministerial visits and no permanent diplomatic representation, rather than looking similar to New Zealand’s relations with other similar sized countries in the South West Pacific. In the event, the strategy proved wrong on this front, as the government started to emphasise bilateral ties as important in their own right, from 2002 onwards. Helen Clark, for example, noted in speech at a State luncheon for East Timorese President Xanana

Gusmao in 2002 that “independent East Timor’s capital, Dili, is the closest Asian capital to New Zealand. That and recent history which has seen many New Zealanders play a part in East Timor’s rebuilding draw us together as close neighbours and friends” (Clark 2002b).

In practical terms, the bilateral ties were confirmed when New Zealand established a Consulate-General after independence with one full time diplomat, which was subsequently converted to an Embassy, with two permanent staff members in early 2006. Moreover, the ongoing instability in the country in 2006 saw a redeployment of military and police forces, belying the assertion that the relationship would not be seen as strategic.

On the military deployment, the various government decisions are not adequately explained by a reference to national interests, of which humanitarianism was the foremost in government minds. Instead, specific deployment decisions are better explained by reference to UN direction and, perhaps more importantly, Australian wishes. (Moving outside the rational actor model, it is also possible to offer explanations based on organisational drivers and bureaucratic politics, but we shall come to these later).

The Australian policy angle is not covered at all in the 2000 Future Directions strategy and despite regional security being cited as a key interest, the interaction between the East Timor involvement and other aspects of regional security is not elaborated. This was noted in Treasury comments on the MFAT-drafted strategy.

*The paper could have a section on what the Australian policy is and how or whether our strategy links with an Australian strategy for ET. It could usefully have a section on how our interventions on ET fit within our broader approach to Southeast Asia, Asia-Pacific etc. Related to this, the paper does not seem to touch on Indonesia and how our strategy links with their policy/role in ET and managing our ongoing relationships with Indonesia. These issues rate a bullet point in the assumptions section but are not discussed in the bulk of the report. (MFAT Archives 2000m).*

Archive material shows clearly that calculation of likely Australian reaction was central to several key decisions on New Zealand’s intervention, especially with regards to the military deployment. In September 2000, for example, Australia made it clear that it saw the security situation in the border region as continuing to be highly unstable and

argued strongly for the New Zealand battalion to stay on. As reported by the New Zealand High Commission in Canberra, New Zealand officials were told to expect from the Australian government “representations in coming weeks to New Zealand to consider a post 31 May 2001 commitment at close to current levels as possible” (MFAT Archives 2000h). This was followed by a call on the Minister of Defence by the Australian High Commissioner and a submission from the New Zealand Ministry of Defence to Mark Burton saying “Australian concerns are well understood. They are shared by the New Zealand Government, which recognises that it is unlikely that the situation in East Timor will be sufficiently stable to allow a full New Zealand military withdrawal”.

In 2001, Australia again made a pitch for the New Zealand battalion to stay, this time for a period of time after independence. Although no recommendation had been made to this effect by New Zealand officials, the decision was made by Prime Minister Helen Clark on her visit to Canberra in March 2001. A reporting cable noted “[Australian] Prime Minister Howard was comforted that Prime Minister Clark indicated a willingness to look at some form of post-May 2002 Timor contribution” (MFAT Archives 2001h). A Foreign Ministry official said that at the time, a meeting to discuss other options was underway, including downsizing, but then a message came from Helen Clark’s office to the effect that “Helen has spoken to John Howard and the troops are staying” [Confidential interview 4].

While the decision to concur with Australian assessments of the appropriate time for downsizing may seem evidence of a realist/regional security driver for government decision rather than a focus on the humanitarian needs of the Timorese, this does not mean it was not a rational choice. Indeed, the quintessentially rational calculation was that it was worth it to New Zealand for a range of reasons to cooperate with Australian wishes. The ongoing insecurity for the people of Cova Lima if New Zealand withdrew early could be included in this calculation.

The decision also shows the explanatory power of Model I compared to Allison’s other two models. Earlier the NZDF had advised the government that any more than three rotations of the New Zealand battalion would be administratively unfeasible, yet in the event, six rotations were managed. While the dynamics of this will be explored in our

assessment of the Model II factors at work, the fact that, in the event, administrative feasibility and ease was not the determining factor in any of the ultimate decisions shows the analytic importance of Model I. Likewise, an official stated that NZDF clearly would have preferred to downsize sooner, and MFAT officials working directly on the East Timor issue were inclined to agree, but in the event, the decision was made singularly by the Prime Minister, thus negating a Model III explanation based on negotiation between bureaucrats [Confidential Interview 4].

On the development assistance front, the rational actor model also holds some explanatory power. The 2000 Future Direction strategy highlighted the growing importance of the ODA relationship. It said that it needed to be focused on “on the one hand, flexible responses to the immediate and medium term needs of UNTAET (acting on behalf of the East Timorese) and, on the other, a consistent longer term focus for New Zealand assistance, on a basis of priorities agreed with the Timorese authorities” (MFAT Archives 2000a). Building on this, NZODA went on to develop a bilateral strategy for the East Timor programme, which was agreed with UNTAET and the East Timor Transitional Administration in August 2001 (MFAT Archives 2001j). The ODA strategy identified three sectors for New Zealand support: Basic Education, Community Development, Natural Resource Development, and Governance/Institution/Capacity Building. 65% of the funding would allocated to direct poverty elimination activities at the community level with 35% going to indirect development such as building government capacity and longer term training. The geographic areas of focus were to be Atauro Island and Cova Lima District as well as Dili. The East Timor Transitional Administration stated that it felt New Zealand’s strategy was “well focused and achievable for a modest bilateral programme”.

The ODA programme can be explained in rational terms, squarely within the context of the government’s humanitarian interests. The sectors identified were those of great need in East Timor and areas where New Zealand could contribute. The submission to the Minister for ODA seeking agreement to the strategy spells out how each of these sectors met identified East Timorese needs, were coordinated with the work of other donors to avoid duplication and built on areas of comparative advantage for New Zealand. Throughout the discussions, the East Timorese delegation concurred with

New Zealand's identification of priorities, seeing needs both at the local level for community development activities such as clean water, schools, agriculture and small scale micro-finance, while also seeing a need for building of the institutions of governance (MFAT Archives 2001j). While the Model II and Model III analysis will show organisational and political factors also determining the shape of the aid programme, there is no doubt that the programme was also designed to fit into a rational framework for New Zealand action.

For the involvement of the NZ Police, the NZ Customs Service, the Department of Corrections and the Department of Courts, a rational actor analysis suggests New Zealand deployed these personnel in response to the real needs of East Timorese (articulated via the UN) in order to demonstrate a commitment to good international citizenship (as set out in the strategy). A rational explanation for these deployments is relatively persuasive. East Timor had no institutional infrastructure in October 1999: nearly all key buildings had been burnt and state institutions such as a Customs service, police force, central bank and foreign ministry had not existed when East Timor was governed as a province of Indonesia. Few Timorese had held senior posts within the Indonesian central or provincial administrations, and those few with experience as civil servants or uniformed personnel under the Indonesian system had mostly fled, or if they remained, were widely distrusted as collaborators. New Zealand Police, Customs Officers and Prison officers were respected and sought after by the UN. They worked well with other key contributors, especially Australians.

The deployment of prison officers to work with UNTAET was unusual in that New Zealand had sole control over the establishment of the prison system, including building prisons, selecting and training the staff and establishing routines. The UN saw this as an experiment, given that its 'default setting' for administrative systems was to recruit diverse groups of international specialists. The result was agreed to be a success, with the prisons built or rebuilt quickly and managed fairly effectively despite serious systemic weaknesses in the justice sector which saw prisoners detained for lengthy period awaiting trials. Prisons were cited as an area where New Zealand's efforts were particularly well recognised by the UN and the East Timorese Transitional Authority (MFAT Archives 2001j).



A rational explanation for the winding down of these deployments by late 2001 centres on the changed circumstances of East Timor on the eve of independence, and in particular, East Timorese leadership's decision about from where it would seek help in the key 'governance' sectors. By mid 2001 the UN had handed over a good deal of routine administrative power to the East Timor Transitional Administration (ETTA). Many of the new Ministers were diaspora Timorese with strong connections to Portugal and lusophone countries, and favoured a policy direction away from reliance on Australia and New Zealand and other English speaking countries. In particular, the choice of Portuguese as the official language (along with Tetum) and the choice of a continental justice system reduced the scope for effective New Zealand assistance. At the instigation of Timorese Ministers, New Zealand Customs officials were replaced with officials from Portugal. Assistance to the prison service was effectively ended by similar political motivations, assisted in this respect by the Timorese leadership's affection for a more punitive correctional system than that New Zealand had hitherto established. New Zealand assistance for Courts Administration became less feasible under the newly adopted civil law system.

The deployment of Police was wound down at a similar time because it was judged that there was no longer an urgent need for New Zealanders to be involved in the UN Police. In this case, it was judged that the UN police were not making an effective contribution as other parts of UNTAET, and moreover, the mission was oversubscribed with offers of police officers from other countries.

The final question for this chapter is whether the rational actor model adequately explains New Zealand government decisions. The answer is that provides a good level of explanation, but with some key gaps. In all the sectors or areas of government decision, a clear rational case can be made for explaining the New Zealand contribution. The key interests are clearly identified in Ministerial speeches and press statements and are codified in the 2000 Future Direction strategy. One can then view the subsequent actions as directly flowing from these. Nevertheless, a rational actor model does leave some aspects of the deployment unexplained.

The first key ‘gap’ in the paradigm is the ‘disconnect’ between the stated priority goals of the government and actual action. The evidence points to the humanitarian wish to help the people of East Timor towards self determination as the most important motivation for the Labour-Alliance government, yet the actual allocations of New Zealand resources suggested most effort was being put into military operations —\$56 million—with a comparatively small amount put into longer term reconstruction and development—around \$2 million per year, which covered all the out-of-pocket costs for Customs, Courts and Corrections as well as the ongoing ODA programmes. An analysis of the military contribution itself suggests that Australian views and interests were an important determinant of the scope and duration of the various military components, with UN views also significant, and it was these drivers rather than a direct analysis of what East Timor actually needed from New Zealand, that shaped the specifics of the deployment. This would suggest that in practice, a more hard-nosed acceptance that New Zealand’s longer term security interests lie with close cooperation with Australia was a more important primary driver of actual government action than humanitarian motivations. While these actual decisions are not outside a rational framework, they show the difficulty of drawing a direct line from stated government or national interests to actual government action.

Within the rational actor model, Allison argues that the analyst works backwards: he or she looks at government action and infers rationality from this. The challenge here is to prove causality. While the national interests are clear from Government statements and from the Future Directions Paper, the action steps required to turn these into government action were not spelled out to any degree. Indeed, in commenting on the Future Directions paper, one Treasury official wrote

*The paper contains a very interesting discussion of East Timor’s history and current demands but seemed to convey very little about future strategy...In any strategy we are looking for a clear outline of where we are now, where we want to go, how we get there and issues to consider along the way that may modify our approach. The ‘where we are now’ is well covered but we thought the other sections could be strengthened (MFAT Archives 2000m).*

The Treasury official asks the MFAT drafters to work harder to fit proposed government action into a more explicitly rational framework. The paper went to Cabinet not

significantly altered, however, meaning that a vague strategy was in fact preferred over an explicitly rational framework.

### ***Allison's Model / proposition tested***

Finally, if Allison's rational actor model is to be used for a study of the East Timor intervention, the general proposition that Allison says arises from this model needs to be assessed, which is that government action which has the highest cost for benefit would be avoided, while action with lower costs for the same benefit would be favoured. Costs for the East Timor deployment are hard to quantify, because costs to national interests are hard to define or agree. Nevertheless if a simple measure of cost in terms of "blood and treasure" is used, then the military deployment had the highest cost of all the government's interventions; five lives were lost and \$56 million expended. Helen Clark, on the eve of East Timorese Independence in May 2002, talked of the "high human cost" in terms of lost lives, and of the more than 5500 NZDF personnel who had served in East Timor (Clark 2002a). On the other hand, the aid programme saw no lives lost and only around \$2million per year expended. The rational actor proposition would therefore conclude that while the costs of the military deployment were considerably higher across the range of identified interests, the benefits must also have been higher, or else the action would not have been taken. Because the benefits of government action in a case like this are intangible and thus cannot be quantified in the way that costs can be quantified, Allison's proposition is impossible to prove or disprove based on the evidence.

### ***Conclusions***

While one can have arguments about which rational motivations were more important than others, this does not in itself negate an argument that government action is based on rational calculations. Nevertheless, a closer study of the East Timor involvement using organisational behaviour and a governmental politics paradigms shows that a rational explanation in many cases does not fully explain why various government actions were chosen over others, how these decisions changed over time, and how implementation affected the outcomes. The conclusion to the thesis will revisit this evaluation of the

usefulness of a rational actor model in explaining New Zealand government action in East Timor from 2000–2002.

## **Chapter Three : New Zealand's involvement in East Timor using an Organisational Behaviour Model**

Allison's second model for explaining government decision is that of organisational behaviour. The model's central tenets are that government actions—such as military, police or ODA interventions—are organisational rather than individual outputs, that the range of existing organisational capabilities constrains government choice, and that the way organisations are structured affects the way information is presented and decisions are structured. Allison argues that an analysis using this model requires in-depth study of the organisations involved, their rationales and cultures. This involves: identifying the organisational actors; examining how problems are divided up between various organisations and then allocated to units within them; identifying each organisation's mission; identifying operational objectives, special capabilities and cultures for each organisation; showing how government action is organisational output, governed by expectations of institutions, sequencing of decisions, standard operating procedures, routines, programmes and repertoires, processes to remove uncertainty, and processes to construct existing problems to fit into existing solutions; exploring mechanisms for central coordination and control, and discussing ways in which leaders' decision-making interacts with organisational processes.

The model infers that government decision can be best predicted by past behaviour. Allison asserts that: governments will choose options where the capability to deliver already exists rather than create new capability; organisational priorities will shape government decisions; decisions will be implemented in a way that reflects pre-existing routines; failures will occur when leaders neglect calculations of administrative feasibility; change will be limited and incremental; long range planning will be disregarded; organisations will act in 'imperialist' ways; and that directed change by governments is uncommon.

This chapter explores the New Zealand government actions in East Timor from early 2000 to late 2002 by looking at each of the organisations involved in some depth,

then by briefly discussing inter-agency coordination mechanisms and what Allison calls “the complexity of joint action”. It attempts to draw some overall conclusions about government action as organisational output and then attempt to test the general and specific propositions that Allison’s model creates.

## ***The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade***

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) determined much of the government’s policy on East Timor from 1975 onwards.<sup>28</sup> The Ministry is headed by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which role has always been filled by career diplomats. There are typically five Deputy Secretaries, typically long serving foreign ministry officials, and around 28 Divisions, each headed by a Director. Within the Ministry, the lead on the East Timor issue was accorded to the South and South East Asia Division, which reported to the Deputy Secretary Programme I. This programme covered all Asian issues as well as general security issues. The South and South East Asia Division also communicated regularly with the United Nations and Commonwealth Division, which forms part of Programme 3 (Multilateral). During the period January 2000 to June 2002, all Official Development Assistance work was also conducted by MFAT, through its Development Cooperation Division. Thereafter, it was managed by the New Zealand Agency for International Development, a semi autonomous agency under MFAT.

MFAT has historically had stability in its organisational structure. Although there were some organisational changes in the late 1980s (the international trade elements of the former Department of Trade and Industry were absorbed by the Ministry in 1987, and an internal reorganisation saw the previously semi-autonomous External Aid Division reabsorbed back into the mainstream and named Development Cooperation Division) for the most MFAT had not experienced any major restructuring and had not had to make forced redundancies. In this respect, MFAT was unusual within the New Zealand civil service in that it was able to emerge from the late 1980s public sector reforms almost

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<sup>28</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) took on the international trade negotiations function in 1987 from the former Department of Trade and Industry and was thereafter called the Ministry of External Relations and Trade (MERT). The name was changed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Manatu Aorere (MFAT) in late 1993. We have used the latter name throughout for simplicity.

entirely unscathed. During the 1990s, MFAT's budget was not adjusted for inflation, meaning approximately a 2–3% decline in real government expenditure on foreign affairs annually, but there was no radical budget pruning. In the mid 1990s MFAT was believed to have the lowest staff attrition rate in the public service.

MFAT's personnel management also reflected a conservative approach. Recruitment of policy officers had historically been at entry level only, with all management and senior management positions filled by long serving officers. MFAT operated a rotational policy where staff serve on assignments of 18 months to two years in Wellington and two to four years overseas. New Zealand diplomats are not generally specialists in any one area of international relations but rather are generalists who have served in a wide variety of assignments. (There is some exception to this for international lawyers who tend to serve in the Legal Division of MFAT while in Wellington.) New Zealand does not have the expectation of political appointees filling most senior diplomatic roles, although such appointments are periodically made. It was not until 2000–2001 that MFAT began to recruit mid level policy officers from outside the Ministry: even so, the numbers were small compared to the entry level recruitments and internal promotions, and most recruits came from closely aligned Government departments such as Defence. Recruitment into MFAT is competitive: there are typically 600–800 eligible applicants for around 20–25 new graduate positions annually. This personnel management strategy suggests an organisational culture of stability and, to an extent, homogeneity.

In 2003–2004 a review of MFAT's policy planning capability was initiated. A presentation of the results of the review shows a rather comprehensive view of the special capabilities of MFAT and its unique constraints. The review characterised policy formulation as a three step process of 1) policy planning (research and analysis, documentation and retrieval), 2) policy advice (submissions, briefing, speeches, Cabinet papers) and 3) policy implementation (negotiation, representation/lobbying, constituency building, visit programmes, collaboration). The implication was that while MFAT excelled at policy implementation, it lacked focus on policy planning. The presentation suggested ways in which MFAT could prioritise resources to favour work with more strategic content—that is, move resources away from policy implementation into policy

planning, and create a “framework of strategic policy analysis articulating the key issues confronting New Zealand” (MFAT Archives 2004). The review’s conclusions were supported by MFAT officials interviewed for this thesis—they commented that through its demonstrated success at policy implementation, MFAT had become a victim of its own success, in that its high quality policy implementation work leads to it being called on to take on more and more of this work, including in a Whole of Government way, with the result that, as one official commented “we don’t have enough space for policy thinking” (Confidential interview 7).

MFAT’s core business involves managing the government relationships with other governments and with international organisations, developing New Zealand’s trade policy and conducting trade negotiations, and looking after the consular interests of New Zealanders overseas. Until mid 2002, MFAT also managed development assistance (ODA). MFAT staff communicate with leaders and officials of other countries and from international organisations, garnering information to report on key developments for the Government in Wellington. For a complex peacekeeping mission, this involves liaison with the UN, with other Troop Contributing Countries (TCNs) and other regional stakeholders, and well as local stakeholders within the country of the mission. MFAT then makes recommendations to Ministers about foreign policy and implement subsequent decisions through liaison with international stakeholders. MFAT officials are also required to work closely with other agencies involved in international policy to ensure all angles are considered when giving advice to Ministers and to provide leadership for other government departments where required—usually in the overall direction of a given relationship. For ODA programmes and projects, MFAT’s day to day work also involved implementation of projects including agreeing ODA strategies with local partners, contracting out work, monitoring and evaluation.

If we view government action as organisational output, it is important to assess how MFAT operated in practice. The culture, mission and mandate of MFAT were clearly reflected in government action with respect to peacekeeping in East Timor. This section highlights five examples of how this occurred: how the routines of MFAT meant there was a predisposition to see things through an ‘Indonesian lens’, in the inherent strategic vagueness of the 2000 Strategy Framework, in the way participation in existing



mechanisms such as the UN's Core Group defined New Zealand involvement, in the way the diplomatic post in Dili was set up, and in the way management of official visits dominated policy.

The first example is the so-called 'Indonesia lens'. MFAT was considered the first and primary source of advice on Indonesian domestic politics, through which lens the East Timor issue was seen until 1999, as well as on ASEAN regional politics and on UN issues. The routines of MFAT determined the way the issue was handled; for example, East Timor was a regular item on the bilateral, regional and multilateral agenda, so consideration of it was determined by the timing of bilateral visits between New Zealand and Indonesia, by the regular schedule of regional meetings (for example the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference and ASEAN Regional Forum) and by annual UN resolutions in the 24<sup>th</sup> (Decolonisation) Committee. Like many other foreign policy issues, the government's policy on East Timor was teased out and adapted via Ministerial correspondence and in key policy speeches.

Throughout the 1980 and 1990s, the policy of the Labour and then National governments, recommended and implemented by MFAT, had been to see the issue through the focus of the bilateral relationship with Indonesia: raising difficult issues such as East Timor (or other human rights concerns) would be balanced against the importance of New Zealand's bilateral political trade and economic relationship with Indonesia and with an eye to Indonesia's leadership role in regional fora such as ASEAN and APEC. New Zealand's policy was calibrated carefully in line with Australia's (although New Zealand never went as far as to give legal recognition to the East Timor annexation) and with the policy of other likeminded nations. From 1997, following the ASEAN economic crisis and the major political change in Indonesia, there seemed more prospect of some kind of resolution to the East Timor issue, New Zealand diplomats formed part of a Core Group in New York to advise the UN Secretary General, and his Special Envoy Jamsheed Marker (Marker 2003).

Given this previous history of involvement on East Timor, MFAT's response to the design and implementation of the New Zealand intervention can be seen as demonstrating a predisposition to see the issue through the lens of the bilateral

relationship with Indonesia, and through the lens of relationships with ASEAN countries and regional security generally. The ‘Jakarta lens’ was cited as a criticism of Australian policy towards Timor, suggesting that officials were blinkered and biased towards economic and trade advantages at the expense of human rights and self determination, a criticism echoed in New Zealand.<sup>29</sup> Others might argue that persuading Ministers to see a particular issue within a broader regional and indeed historical context was not biased, but rather, rational and sensible. An organisational behaviour explanation bypasses these arguments of the rights or wrongs of such a bias and suggests that it was a more automatic reflection of organisational routines: in the case of MFAT, then, it could have been simply a function of the way the Ministry was (and is) organised.

Coverage of East Timor after 1999 stayed with South East Asia Division of MFAT where it had been throughout the preceding decades. As there was no permanent diplomatic post in Dili until late 2000, Timorese issues were covered by visits from the New Zealand Embassy in Jakarta as well as by Wellington based officials (often jointly). The organisational set-up meant that the Indonesia-specific angles of the East Timor issue received comprehensive coverage, including the West Timor refugee issues and the trials of those accused of serious crimes—including the trial of Jacobus Bere who was convicted of murdering New Zealand soldier Private Leonard Manning. In the period until the Dili office was established, East Timorese perceptions of future directions received considerably less coverage: views of key leaders were sought during visits but general public reaction to the UN’s approach, for example, was necessarily reported second hand.<sup>30</sup>

The bias towards an Indonesian-centric view of the issue can be seen in the 2000 Strategy Framework where, of the “Background and current situation” section, five paragraphs are devoted to the history of Indonesian rule and two further paragraphs

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<sup>29</sup> For discussion of the criticism of Australian policy, and Australian intelligence gathering and assessment in particular, see Desmond Ball “Silent Witness: Australian Intelligence and East Timor” *Pacific Review* 14:1 2001, 35-62, p 45, and Nicholas J. Wheeler and Tim Dunne “East Timor and the New Humanitarian Interventionism” *International Affairs* 77: 4 (2001) 805-827

<sup>30</sup> Similar criticism was also made of the UN, that is, that it consulted primarily with East Timorese leaders Xanana Gusmao and Jose Ramos Horta and did not have adequate mechanisms for consulting with a broader range of local stakeholders, or incorporating wider public opinion into its formulation of policy. See for example Chopra, J. (2000). “The UN’s Kingdom of East Timor.” *Survival* 42(3): 27-40.

explain the shape of the UN mission. East Timorese internal politics and East Timorese views are not covered in any detail. Likewise, under the “New Zealand Involvement” section, attention is paid to the bilateral relationship with Indonesia before 1999 and to New Zealand’s involvement via the UN. The linkages between East Timorese activists and New Zealand groups are not emphasised, although the award of NZODA scholarships to some East Timorese students is noted (MFAT Archives 2000a). While rational explanation might suggest that the Indonesian perspective was emphasised because it was strategically important, an organisational behaviour analysis suggests it was emphasised because that was the organisational routine.

The second way in which organisational routines can be shown in MFAT action is in the vagueness in forward-looking strategy. Drafted initially by the New Zealand Embassy to Indonesia, the 2000 Future Directions paper and the attached Strategy Framework explains past policy including New Zealand’s broader relationship with Indonesia, and Indonesia’s approach to rule in the territory—the explanation balanced criticism of Indonesia’s brutality with acknowledgement of its investment in infrastructure and education. The strategy noted that New Zealand had acknowledged East Timor’s incorporation into Indonesia “as a matter of fact” but accepted that “in retrospect, too little emphasis was placed on a fundamental breach of international law and human rights” (MFAT Archives 2000a). This careful balancing of explaining past action while accepting a policy error shows the importance MFAT writers place on balance and nuance in official advice.

On the other hand, when it came to future action, the strategy is much less strong, with the strategic objectives kept vague and actions to achieve them left unspecified. The strategy says, simply that in the “first phase”, New Zealand will want to monitor the performance of UNTAET, build linkages to future government, political parties, and institutions in the new state, and shape New Zealand assistance to the new state in ways consistent with local needs. In the “second phase”, it says “relations will resemble those New Zealand has with many other small independent states”. The strategy then highlights a mix of “strategic issues for New Zealand” which include some general comments on ODA, East Timorese constitutional development, East Timor’s relations with its neighbours and international organisations, economic development and people to people

contacts (MFAT Archives 2000a). In this section, the strategy is a mixture of general comment on the situation at the time and rather unspecific suggestions for future New Zealand government action.

The shortfalls of the strategy in this respect were highlighted at the time by Treasury which commented that it “seemed to convey very little about future strategy”. Specifically, Treasury wanted the paper to include more on the envisaged role of the peacekeeping force in the transition to statehood, options for differing levels of New Zealand involvement in East Timor in general, more discussion on Australian policy, predictions about local and regional political developments which might affect policy, more definition about the levels of support expected from NZ Police and other agencies, more detail of the role of other government agencies in ODA planning, and more specific timelines and milestones within the two years of transition to independence. Treasury called for “a table that identifies the contributions of each agency over the timeline of the intervention” (MFAT Archives 2000m).

The organisational behaviour explanations for the vagueness are three-fold. First, the current and future situation in East Timor was taking New Zealand foreign policy into uncharted waters (just as it was taking the UN into new territory also). As an independent state in the region, with a new and to some extent unknown leadership, with a complicated historical relationship with its geographic region, with the continued ambiguous role of the UN as both Government and development institution for the territory, with internecine Timorese internal politics and, especially, with the Timorese leaders’ idiosyncratic drive for a Portuguese/lusophone identity, East Timor was a complicated and unprecedented situation. It did not fit easily into the organisational repertoires used for regional foreign policy responses. The result was strategic vagueness.

Secondly, the organisational culture of MFAT meant strategic planning was not its strength. Instead, MFAT excelled at organising policy advice and policy implementation: briefs, speeches, cabinet papers and visit programmes. As one MFAT official commented, “Treasury’s critique of our paper, in retrospect, was very useful. It brought rigour to how we express ourselves: we needed to tighten up and insert criteria...Treasury was more advanced than MFAT in the theory of strategic planning and

academic rigour” (Confidential interview 7). This organisational inability to define and commit to longer term strategy was not limited just to MFAT: other agencies suffered the same weakness. The file copy of the Treasury email, for example, contains notes in the margin to suggest that three out of four other departments had not been able to provide details on planned involvement over the next two years.

Thirdly, the standard operating procedure of the Cabinet paper mitigated against substantive detail, both for reasons of timeliness and length. In the margin of the file copy of Treasury’s email, an MFAT official noted that it was not possible in short time to provide details of Police’s and other agencies’ planned involvement with UNTAET and how this related to other countries’ involvement and that rather, this would be provided when approval for deployments was sought. The marginalia adds that while an earlier draft had contained a table with each agency’s involvement over two years, this had been culled by the MFAT CEO’s office, as the paper was already over the maximum allowable length (MFAT Archives 2000m).

A third example of how organisational behaviour determined government policy for East Timor comes from a recognition of New Zealand’s rather privileged role as a member of the Core Group. The ‘New York angle’ to the East Timor issue comes through clearly in a study of the MFAT archives. While a rational actor analysis might point to New Zealand’s consistent support for the UN and for seeing effective UN peacekeeping, an organisational behaviour analysis might see New Zealand’s participation in the so-called Core Group of countries interested in East Timor as providing a more practical explanation for the high level of bureaucratic activity undertaken by New Zealand diplomats in New York. The Core Group had been formed in 1997 and comprised Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan, as interested states who were not otherwise participants in the negotiations between Indonesia and Portugal that the UN Secretary-General was sponsoring through his Special Envoy Jamsheed Marker.<sup>31</sup> The limited scope of this group and the exclusion

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<sup>31</sup> Marker also had a wider “Friends of the Secretary-General” group which was basically self-selected—it included the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the World Bank, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Brazil, Austria, Germany, South Africa, the Philippines, the Netherlands and Norway: this group did not survive as a continuing structure. (Marker 2000 )

of any ASEAN members and lusophone states may have reflected the assumption, pre 1999, that any ASEAN members would be too close to Indonesia and any lusophone states too close to Portugal.

The Core Group continued as a key discussion forum and caucus after 1999 and throughout the tenure of UNTAET, giving New Zealand a unique vantage point and access to UN thinking, compared, say to other troop contributing nations such as the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Brazil or even Portugal itself. In 2000 Portugal asked to join the Core Group, showing the importance that membership of this grouping had accrued.<sup>32</sup>

Membership of the Core Group triggered numerous bureaucratic routines. The New Zealand Permanent Mission to the UN in New York was required to seek advice and prepare briefings in advance of each Core Group meeting: this timetable drove many aspects of Government policy making. Core Group members were expected to make statements at the regular and widely attended UN Security Council meetings that examined and approved UNTAET's mandate: this also generated a bureaucratic momentum and requirement for policy decision-making. Core Group members were also expected to lobby UN Security Council Members in favour of continued budget support for UNTAET.

Membership of the Core Group both reflected New Zealand's high level of interest in UNTAET and created expectations of New Zealand government action. Deployments of military and police were carefully calibrated to ensure acceptability with the UN—for example, the last rotation of NZ Police to December 2001 was agreed only because delays in advising the UN of an intention to pull out would have made a May 2001 withdrawal “indecently hasty”.<sup>33</sup> Had New Zealand not been a member of the Core Group, the ‘optics’ of such a withdrawal might have been less sensitive. The requirement for the Core Group to lobby for funding for UNTAET also had a bearing on New Zealand policy: while there was a good case to be made that some UNTAET functions could be

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<sup>32</sup> Portuguese participation was the subject of some discussion via diplomatic cable, with all seeing Portugal as a key player in the future of East Timor, but with several reservations expressed about whether the Portuguese agenda was entirely compatible with that of other Core Group members. In the event, Portugal was admitted without any argument.

<sup>33</sup> This is discussed in some detail in the following chapter on governmental politics.

better carried out after independence by other UN agencies e.g. UNDP, rather than UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Core Group feared such a move would lessen the overall international commitment and resources for East Timor. New Zealand therefore lobbied actively for the post-independence UN presence to be a peacekeeping mission funded from assessed contributions.

The fourth area to be highlighted to show how organisational behaviour affected government action is that of ‘visit diplomacy’. Key decisions were managed in the context of visits, both inwards and outwards, of UN and East Timorese leaders. Box 1 shows the number of visits to and from East Timor in the period 1999 to 2002. Indeed, the high level of Ministerial interest is shown by the fact that Hon Phil Goff’s first overseas visit as Foreign Minister was to East Timor, in January 2000. The reality of visit management meant that MFAT resources were tied up managing logistics issues (who would meet with whom, where and when, where and how they would travel, where they would stay etc.) and coordinating briefing requests and writing briefs. Necessarily much of the content of official briefing would have been reused each time, as there would not have been time for a ‘first principles’ assessment of policy and strategy for each visit. In addition to Ministerial visits, there was a Parliamentary Select committee enquiry which demanded a high level of servicing by MFAT, and there was a high volume of Ministerial correspondence. Strategic thinking, therefore, became subsumed in day to day work, with urgent concerns getting priority. Any new policy directions were left to be agreed incrementally, for example, via speeches and press statements.

The reality of day to day foreign policy work does not sit easily with a Model I approach, which suggests a certain level of direction and coherence. On the other hand, Ministers occasionally saw the recycling of official briefs as designed to ‘wear down’ officials’ political masters, and to get them to agree to what officials wanted—suggesting they saw it as Model III political tussle. As one experienced Minister is said to have commented to a junior Cabinet colleague (on a non-foreign policy matter) “They’ve been waiting for a new Minister like you to recycle this dross” (Interview with Hon Matt Robson, 7 February 2007). Officials, though, did not see it like that. They saw the recycling of briefs as a standard operating procedure, and a way to avoid working to midnight each day. MFAT officials interviewed for this study instead emphasised the

relentless work pressure and the need to ‘fight fires’, suggesting a somewhat more chaotic and piecemeal approach to government action (Confidential interviews 1,2,4,7). The Model II explanation, then, better represents how officials saw the process.

**Table 2.1: Visits to and from East Timor from 2000–2002**

(Ministerial and Parliamentary visits and senior East Timorese leaders’ visits are in bold, as these are the visit for which substantive briefing would need to have been prepared. [Not all visits of NZDF, Police Customs and Corrections senior officials are included here.])

12–15 January 2000	<b>Visit to East Timor by Hon Phil Goff, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade.</b> Also Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ambassador to Indonesia, Senior Adviser on East Timor, Brig Clive Lilley, staff from NZ Embassy Jakarta, 8–10 media
2–4 February 2000	<b>Visit to East Timor by Parliamentary delegation, led by Hon Mark Burton, Minister of Defence, including Hon Matt Robson, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs,</b> and MPs Graham Kelly, Hon Peter Dunne, Dr Wayne Mapp Ron Mark and Keith Locke
10–13 April 2000	Visit to East Timor by New Zealand Embassy Jakarta staff, including Defence Attaché, NZODA manager
13–15 April 2000	Visit to East Timor by Special Adviser Julie MacKenzie
26–30 June 2000	Visit to East Timor by officials from the Ministry of Defence - Defence Policy and Planning Unit
4–10 July 2000	<b>Visit to New Zealand by Xanana Gusmao, Leader CNRT</b>
28–30 August 2000	<b>Visit by delegation from the Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Select Committee</b>
30–31 August 2000	Visit to East Timor by Chief of Defence Force
Early September 2000	Visit to East Timor by Senior Adviser on East Timor Julie MacKenzie
29–30 September 2000	<b>Visit to East Timor by Prime Minister Helen Clark to East Timor</b>
October 2000	Visit to East Timor by CEO, Department of Corrections
25–26 October 2000	<b>Visit to New Zealand by Sergio Viera de Mello, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to East Timor</b>
30 October 2000	Visit to New Zealand by local government study delegation from East Timor
22 November 2000	Visit to East Timor by Deputy Head of Mission and Second Secretary, NZ Embassy Jakarta and incoming New Zealand Representative Dr Jonathan Austin
19 December 2000	<b>Visit to New Zealand by Peter Galbraith, Cabinet Member for Political Affairs and Justice, responsible</b>



	<b>for Timor Sea Negotiations, East Timor Transitional Administration</b>
31 January–1 February 2001	<b>Visit by Minister of Defence Hon Mark Burton and MPs Judith Tizard and Simon Power</b>
26 February–2 March 2001	Visit to East Timor by officials from Development Cooperation Division, MFAT for ODA discussions
12–13 March 2001	Visit to New Zealand of Liborio Pereira, Head of East Timor Public Service Commission
16 March 2001	Visit to East Timor by New Zealand Police Commissioner
2–4 April 2001	Visit to New Zealand of Agio Pereira, Chief of Staff to Xanana Gusmao
28 May–2 June	Visit to East Timor by desk officer for East Timor, MFAT
4–6 June 2001	<b>Visit to New Zealand of José Ramos-Horta, Minister of Foreign Affairs, East Timor Transitional Administration</b>
28–29 July 2001	<b>Visit by Hon Steve Mahary, Minister of Education, MP for Palmerston North</b>
29–31 August 2001	<b>Visit to East Timor by Hon Phil Goff, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade - election observer mission</b>
13–14 February 2002	<b>Visit to East Timor by Governor General Dame Silvia Cartwright</b>
24–28 March 2002	<b>Visit to New Zealand of Dennis McNamara, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to East Timor</b>
19–20 May 2002	<b>Visit to East Timor by Prime Minister Helen Clark, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Hon Phil Goff, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon Matt Robson, Chief of Defence Force and others, for independence ceremonies.</b>
8–10 September 2002	<b>Visit to New Zealand of José Ramos-Horta, Minister of Foreign Affairs, East Timor</b>
18–21 September 2002	<b>Visit to New Zealand of Xanana Gusmao, President of East Timor</b>
18 November 2002	<b>Visit to East Timor of Minister of Defence, Hon Mark Burton and Chief of Defence Force, for drawdown of NZBATT, Suai</b>

East Timor was also a key issue in New Zealand's other important relationships during the period 2000–2002. MFAT archives, for example, record the Embassy in Washington asking for more briefing on East Timor issues due to US interest in this. Hon Phil Goff notes that other leaders were often seeking his views—in his first meeting

with Australian Foreign Minister Downer, in January 2000, they discussed East Timor for more than two hours. East Timor also figured highly in discussions with the EU, especially when Portugal had the presidency. Goff commented:

*It was a major area of discussion with other countries. This was advantageous for New Zealand. People were looking to us. It was one of those rare occasions when New Zealand could contribute something back. Our views were complementary to, but independent of, those of Australia, for example (Interview with Hon Phil Goff, 13 February 2007).*

In practice, this meant MFAT's South East Asia Division was not only writing briefings for their own relentless schedule of bilateral visits and Core Group meetings in New York, but also contributing East Timor briefing for all other major visits in the two year period. Necessarily, time for term strategic thinking was an unaffordable luxury.

A final example of how organisational behaviour determined governmental action was in the approach to the opening of the Representative Office in November 2000, with Dr Jonathan Austin as the New Zealand Representative. The opening of a permanent Embassy-type function triggered ordinary organisational routines such as more regular and ongoing dialogue with Timorese and UN leaders and officials, with other aid donors and the production of regular diplomatic reporting. It also allowed the Ministry to make enquiries on specific issues and get answers quickly. The opening of the office allowed for a great deal more engagement with Timorese actors, both within the leadership at a working level. It also allowed for impartial (from a New Zealand perspective at least) critique of the UN operations. Dr Austin was able to provide direct comment on the performance of, for example, the UN Police, the Prison Service and Customs Service, which gave a better view of real progress on the ground as opposed to the UN's reporting which reflected a more optimistic bent. Another key function of the office was as a coordination point for the New Zealand agencies working in East Timor. This fed directly into MFAT's interaction with these agencies in Wellington, allowing MFAT to take on a more informed and engaged leadership within with the Whole of Government processes being developed at that time. In May 2002 it was agreed to rename the office as a Consulate-General and to keep it open for another two years as a minimum.

From an organisational point of view, the opening of a Representative Office and then a Consulate-General established Dili as a diplomatic post within MFAT's network and set up the framework for the eventual establishment of a full Embassy in late 2005. In other words, it triggered a routine that once begun, was hard to stop. It is clear that many within MFAT were only too aware of the power of this routine and sought to limit it. For example in the Cabinet paper seeking endorsement for the opening of the office the words 'small' and 'temporary' are highlighted (MFAT Archives 2000a). In the letter of guidance to Dr Jonathan Austin on his role as New Zealand representative, the limited resources available for the office were emphasised (MFAT Archives 2000e). In 2002, upon East Timor's independence, the decision to rename the office a Consulate-General as opposed to an Embassy was precisely because it was felt that a Consulate-General would be easier to close quietly, a point emphasised in this study by both officials and Ministers (Confidential interview 6, Interview with Hon Phil Goff 13 February 2007). There are different explanations for why MFAT officials sought to limit the scale and tenure of the office: an organisational behaviour explanation would be that they did not believe the Ministry could sustain an Embassy financially within existing resources, nor did they believe new resources would be available for this. It is clear that the drive to constrain the organisational predisposition towards the assumption of permanence came from within MFAT rather than from political leaders (the Model III analysis will return to this point).

## ***Official Development Assistance***

Until June 2002, the New Zealand Official Development Assistance (NZODA) programme was managed by the Development Cooperation Division of MFAT. While decisions on aid were made within the parameters of the NZODA guiding principles and policies, the fact that aid management came under the foreign ministry left room for criticism that aid policies were driven by the broader *realpolitik* of foreign policy. This view was reinforced by the fact that although Development Cooperation Division was the largest of MFAT's divisions and was staffed with a mixture of aid specialists and foreign policy generalists, nevertheless all the policy management positions (Director and Deputy Directors) were MFAT generalists.

In 2000 the new Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for Official Development Assistance, Alliance Party member Matt Robson, initiated a review of NZODA. The review was generally critical of MFAT's management of aid, saying that the NZODA programme was spread too thinly amongst too many partners, that it had multiple and sometimes conflicting goals, that allocations to countries and institutions were not based on systematic analysis of needs, that each programme had too many projects, that too much was spent on tertiary scholarships and that there was insufficient monitoring and evaluation of aid impacts. The report was especially critical of MFAT's organisational management, saying its Development Cooperation Division did not encourage either recruitment and retention of development specialists or systematic staff training or career development for development specialists. It pointed to too-frequent rotation of desk officers and the lack of acceptable handovers, organised files, funding guidelines and work plans. According to the report, DEV was rather "a training ground for diplomats and a dumping ground for poor performers". The review recommended a fully autonomous aid agency be established, reporting directly to its Minister, with its own stream of funding, and with the ability to recruit and train its staff directly. It should focus on the Pacific with a single goal of poverty elimination (NZODA Ministerial Review Team 2001).

The NZODA review findings met some resistance within MFAT, especially at senior levels (Confidential interviews 2, 7) but its recommendations were for the most part adopted. In July 2002 the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) was formally established as a semi-autonomous body under MFAT: while it was not the fully autonomous body recommended by the review, it did have all the "important elements" recommended by the review: a core staffing of development professionals recruited independently, a Director-General directly accountable to a Minister and its own separate funding stream. The vision of the new agency was "a safe and just world free of poverty" and its mission was "eliminating poverty through development partnerships" (NZAID 2002).

The process to establish the new agency was not without its problems. Having a single goal of poverty elimination did not answer many questions about the best ways to achieve this goal, whether direct interventions (e.g. provision of basic social services) or

indirect interventions such as governance reforms or policy formulation. There was suspicion amongst some NZAID staff that MFAT sought to emphasise the importance of a focus on governance as a covert way to divert scarce aid resources away from poverty elimination and towards more 'selfish' foreign policy objectives. Many MFAT staff, for their part, resented the higher salaries paid to new NZAID staff, and felt that those with previous experience in aid management within MFAT were being marginalised and their experience discounted in favour of specialists with no experience working within the government context.

Like the foreign policy developed by MFAT, New Zealand's Official Development Assistance (NZODA) programme for East Timor during the period 2000 to 2002 also shows evidence of being driven, at least in part, by organisational agendas and routines. This is evidenced by the influence of historical factors on the aid programme, by the preference for using emergency and disaster relief mechanisms to deliver aid, by the use of 'governance' sector interventions, through the 2001 ODA strategy, and in the way organisational change affected ODA delivery.

Historically, the NZODA programme for East Timor had been managed as part of the Indonesia programme. Wary of seeing aid money being perceived as propping up the Indonesian occupation of the territory, NZODA had focused instead on managing a Social and Community Development Fund, with projects working on basic level development in partnership with local community groups. The partnership with Roman Luan organisation on Atauro Island, for example, delivered basic education, water and sanitation, agricultural assistance and transport to people on the island. NZODA had also supported work of local church-run technical training college Dom Bosco and the Suara Timor Lorosae newspaper (MFAT Archives 2000f).

The other key NZODA programme for East Timor was postgraduate scholarships for study in New Zealand. Again, to avoid accusations of political interference by Indonesia, NZODA had set this scheme up so that candidates put themselves forward and were selected by New Zealand, rather than by Indonesian education authorities. Several people with independence sympathies who would later become key figures in the Transitional Administration and independent government were educated in New Zealand,

including Dr Rui Araujo who would later become the Minister of Health and Armindo Maia who became Minister of Education. Such scholarship programmes were a standard part of most ODA programmes and Wellington structures such as the Scholarships Management Unit within the Development Cooperation Division of MFAT as well as the international students offices at universities were well organised for delivering this kind of assistance (MFAT Archives 2000f).

After UNTAET was established, the NZODA programme continued to be managed from Jakarta, and although technically separated from the Indonesia programme, the Social and Community Development Fund was basically unchanged. In November 2000, when the MFAT office opened in Dili, management of the NZODA programme was transferred to the New Zealand Representative there. In practice, though, the programmes, routines and SOPs of the programme remained in place, including ongoing programmes, budget allocations, grant application forms and assessment processes.

The use of emergency relief and multilateral trust funds were another way in which organisational routines affected policy. In 1999 NZODA allocated a considerable sum to emergency relief following the destruction of the territory. By early 2000 the assistance totalled NZ\$1,820,000, which comprised \$520,000 from the bilateral programme and the rest from multilateral allocations. The money was given primarily to UN agencies, especially the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) which received NZ\$1.075m in the period, the World Food Programme and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). New Zealand NGOs including Oxfam, Tear Fund and World Vision received \$320,000 (MFAT Archives 2000f). Emergency relief is favoured as way of delivering large amount of ODA quickly, particularly at the end of a financial year, it involves transferring funds to an appropriate agency which in turn takes responsibility for implementation and accountability. It does not, however, provide country-specific kudos for the donor, and can be relatively expensive, as UN Agencies in particular have high overheads. While aid for emergency relief can be seen as a rational response to pressing humanitarian needs, organisational drivers are also important, as emergency relief presents a fast and simple administrative option for officials.

Later allocations to the World Bank-managed Trust Fund for East Timor (TFET) which totalled more than NZ\$1million (MFAT Archives 2001u) and to the post-independence budget support fund the Transitional Support Programme (TSP) also reflect a desire to use administratively simple mechanisms to deliver ODA, as sufficient bilateral mechanisms did not exist. While rationales were provided for these allocations, including support for multilateral and multi-donor mechanisms, in reality, administrative feasibility was the key driver. A report from the NZ Representative in Dili noted, for example, that “TFET provides good sectoral and donor coordination and brings in the European donors, but is an expensive delivery mechanism for NZODA” (MFAT Archives 2001c).

The NZODA programme included funding for several projects under the generic “governance” heading. This included deployments of Customs, Corrections and Courts personnel, as well as smaller projects by other agencies. These ODA programmes reflected both real development needs and organisational drivers, often not those of the NZODA officials. Officials recall supply-side desire by various New Zealand agencies to ‘do something to help’ (Confidential Interview 2). A local government study tour, for example, was organised in 2000, mainly because Local Government New Zealand wanted to be involved. The subsequent evaluation of the project by Dili-based staff was that it had had little impact (Confidential interview 1). For the Corrections deployment, it was clear that the desire to help stemmed from a sense of the urgent need for East Timor to have a functioning prison service, and also, from the desire by the Department of Corrections to please their Minister, the long time East Timor activist Matt Robson (Confidential interview 1, Interview with Hon Matt Robson 7 February 2007). In these cases, the developmental benefit of some of the New Zealand deployments—the standard logical rationale for aid—was less important than the fact that at the time, NZODA was one of the few sources of government funding that was not entirely allocated at the beginning of each financial year, and thus provided scope for disbursements outside budget rounds.

The situation was not without its advantages for NZODA. The ‘governance’ sector interventions allowed NZODA to spend all of the East Timor allocation easily, in a country where disbursement of ODA through local channels would otherwise be difficult, given the newness of the local administrative structures and most local NGOs, and the

expense and diffused impact of using multilateral agencies. These programmes also gave NZODA access to higher level discussions on development policy: a seat at the donors' table. Nevertheless for these governance interventions, developmental rationales had to be retrospectively sought rather than being the drivers of the programme. Occasionally, NZODA declined to fund governance interventions; in early 2001, for example, it was suggested that NZODA might fund the deployment of NZ Police as UN Civilian Police. NZODA could not fit this into the existing ODA programme due to the large cost and the marginal developmental benefit, although aid officials did agree to fund New Zealand Police trainers at the East Timor Police College (MFAT Archives 2001e).

In 2001 NZODA agreed with UNTAET and the East Timor Transitional Administration a four year development assistance strategy and forward aid programme. While a Model I analysis would say that this was based on a rational discussion of East Timor's needs and New Zealand's capacity to assist—and indeed the strategy states at the outset that this was its purpose—an organisational behaviour analysis shows this strategy was equally a product of existing routines and agendas. For a start, the strategy did little more than list and endorse the existing sectors for development assistance, including community development, education and governance, and add one more—natural resource development—an area where NZODA already had good projects in other countries, and thus well established contacts and expertise. In this respect, it provided cover for the current programmes and simultaneously served to exclude new ideas except in discrete areas where existing routines could be applied. An official noted later “these were historical sectors for engagement and we were trying to justify these retrospectively” (Confidential Interview 2). Another commented “...of course we didn't start with a blank piece of paper. We adjusted the pre-existing East Timor part of the Indonesia programme.” Furthermore, in the context of a high level of popular interest in helping East Timor with many people and groups having ‘good ideas’ for New Zealand's aid, there was a real risk of a dispersed and ineffective ODA effort. As one official commented “every man and his dog wanted to go to East Timor and ‘do something’ ...the strategy was very useful for sifting out some of these ‘special’ ideas.” The official went on to say “at the political level, politicians sometimes want to do things quickly, and it becomes very ad hoc... the strategy was useful there too” (Confidential Interview 2).



Likewise, the East Timorese sometimes had unrealistic expectations of NZODA. Another official said “the Donor Coordination Unit of UNTAET asked us to include agriculture and forestry as key sectors. We had to decline as we had so few resources, our efforts would have been ineffective in these big areas” (Confidential Interview 1).

The structure of the 2001 East Timor ODA Strategy’s provenance was the strategy developed the year before, for Indonesia (Confidential Interview 2). That strategy had been prepared following a newly developed process called the Bilateral Assessment Framework, and NZODA officials were pleased with the efficacy of their new routine so they sought to replicate it in East Timor. The fact that the bilateral ODA consultation with New Zealand was at New Zealand’s request, was the first that UNTAET officials had conducted, and the fact that the East Timor Transitional Administration officials had been in their roles only a matter of weeks all meant that the predetermined NZODA routine was adopted without much negotiation. The New Zealand Representative in Dili noted in advance that, “Ours will be the first bilateral high level consultations that the Timorese have conducted. They hope to establish a pattern, but Timorese colleagues will be on a steep learning curve” (MFAT Archives 2001f). In the subsequent report on the talks he noted “the High Level Consultations with New Zealand were an important capacity building exercise for the East Timor Transitional Administration and we provided extensive assistance with their preparation, including passing over a copy of our brief” (MFAT Archives 2001d).

While to suggest that an ODA strategy might not be drawn from first principles of the development needs of the partner country, but rather might be based on the sectors which the donor country has historically been involved with (and to suggest that the process for agreeing such a strategy might reflect donor administrative needs more than local needs) may seem heretical to development purists, in organisational terms it makes good sense. Aid programmes do not appear instantly: they require expertise to be marshalled and partnerships built with the host country at the political and operational level, all of which take time. The organisational pressure to select certain sectors is not inherently irrational, rather, it applies a ‘logic of appropriateness’ rather than a logic of action. Likewise, using existing NZODA routines for the format of the dialogue was not irrational but rather appropriate as East Timor had no routines of its own.

ODA organisational change was another way in which Allison's Model II can be seen as relevant. Throughout the period 2000–2002 preparations were being made to implement the 2000 ODA Review's finding and set up the new NZAID agency. Key changes recommended by the Review included a drive for more strategic direction for ODA programmes, a focus on poverty elimination rather than the earlier and more broad-based NZODA goals, and for more specialist development cooperation staff. The Review's call for more strategic aid prompted the agreement of the 2001 East Timor strategy. Nevertheless, once NZAID was formally constituted in July 2002, much of the earlier NZODA work, including much of the work done to prepare for the new Agency such as the development of Bilateral Assessment Frameworks, was deemed to be part of the "old system" and was thus sidelined. The result was that the 2001 strategy was not supported institutionally in Wellington: it was argued that the new independent government would need to renegotiate the entire programme. In particular, the 'governance' sectoral focus was deemed to be a hangover from earlier politically-driven aid programmes (which were considered incompatible with a poverty elimination focus) and given that several of the New Zealand deployments faced organisational and political difficulties and had been discontinued, this sectoral focus was quietly dropped by 2003. One official commented,

*Although we based it on the current programme at the time, 2001 strategy was a coherent plan which fitted in to the overall strategy for donors in East Timor. But with NZAID's arrival, it all fell away... Given the rapid change on our side, and on the Timorese side, perhaps we should have worked to shorter timeframes (Confidential interview 1).*

The NZAID organisational changes also saw a major reorganisation of staffing. The former Development programme teams led by Deputy Director level officers were DP1 (Pacific) DP2 (Pacific) DP3 (Asia) and DP4 (Multilateral and Emergency). These were reformed into two larger groups: Pacific Group and Global Group, each headed by a Director-level appointee, and each comprising smaller teams led by team leaders. However the NZAID agency endured significant staffing gaps throughout this period of reorganisation: the position of Director of Global Group remained effectively vacant from July 2002 until March 2003. The team leader for Asia, Africa and Latin America within the Global Group was not appointed until April 2003. In the financial year from 1

July 2002 until 30 June 2003, the East Timor programme suffered, therefore, from an absence of management oversight, with the result that as at April 2003, with 10 months of the financial year passed, only 32% of the allocation had been spent. One official commented that in this period, not only were there staffing gaps but there was also massive new workload drafting policies and agreeing organisational matters—“it was madness” (Confidential Interview 2).

Clearly, in the implementation of development assistance as well as in the policy for it, organisational factors remain crucial in determining final outcomes. The shape of the aid programme reflected historical realities and ongoing programmes, the need to deliver aid through simple administrative mechanisms such as emergency relief and multilateral trust funds, and the need to use ODA to fund the government’s desired engagement in East Timor by a range of New Zealand government agencies. It also reflected the organisational routines of NZODA and the realities of change to a new ODA management agency. Overall, then, Allison’s Model II provides important insights into the ODA decisions for East Timor for this period.

## ***The New Zealand Defence Force***

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) comprises the New Zealand Army, the Royal New Zealand Navy and the Royal New Zealand Air Force. The primary mission of the NZDF is defined as “to secure New Zealand against external threat, to protect our sovereign interests, including in the Exclusive Economic Zone, and to be able to take action to meet likely contingencies in our strategic area of interest”.

Although the outcomes and mission focus chiefly on protecting New Zealand’s security from external threats, in reality NZDF has a strong focus on commitments outside New Zealand. The introduction to the 2006 Statement of Intent by the Minister of Defence, for example, states that, “As responsible international citizens we [NZDF] continue to play our part in the war against terrorism, regional security, peacekeeping, humanitarian relief and national building”. The Chief of Defence Force, in his introduction, adds, “The NZDF will continue to play an important part in maintaining New Zealand’s place as a good international citizen through its support of the United Nations and the rule of international law” (NZDF 2006).

Within the Whole of Government process, NZDF works towards many outcomes shared with other government departments: peacekeeping in East Timor being a good example of this. The Minister has stated that “with few exceptions, NZDF is the supporting agency”, suggesting that it does not have a lead role in determining outcomes or shaping policies for complex integrated peacekeeping missions (NZDF 2006).

Organisationally, the NZDF is like military forces all over the world: it relies on a force structure of separate officer and soldier ranks. Personnel are recruited young and promoted through the ranks: there is not any recruitment to senior ranks from outside the organisation.<sup>34</sup> Like MFAT, this creates institutional strength but can also lead to entrenched standard operating procedures and some potential resistance to change. A strong command culture is necessary for effective military operations, but likewise can create a culture where decisions by senior officers are seldom questioned.

NZDF personnel expect to serve overseas and are encouraged to be ready for such deployments, including at short notice. Extra monetary compensation, medals and promotion prospects reward this service. This readiness to deploy, a central feature of military culture, has a direct impact on the Government’s willingness to deploy NZDF overseas, in comparison to other agencies.

During the period 2000–2002 NZDF underwent significant organisational changes. These changes were presaged by the 1997 Defence Review of the Foreign Affairs Trade and Defence Select Committee headed by Derek Quigley, and were embodied in the Labour Party’s 1999 election manifesto. In June 2000 the new Government issued its *Defence Policy Framework 2000 (DPF)*. The DPF suggested that the five areas of Defence focus would be: defence of New Zealand’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), a strong strategic relationship with Australia, the fulfillment of our responsibilities in the Pacific Islands, an expanding role in the security dialogue of Asia; and a global approach. Once the policy framework was agreed, defence capability was reviewed, so that the NZDF would be structured, staffed and equipped to meet these policy goals. The 2001 Defence Statement *A Modern Sustainable Defence Force to Meet*

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<sup>34</sup> Occasionally NZDF does recruit personnel from other military forces e.g. from Australia, the UK or Canada, all of which have similar cultures.

*New Zealand's Needs* (NZDF 2001) encapsulated the capability review's changes, which focused on a land force (army) as the chief component of the NZDF, with "a more practical Navy and refocused and updated Air Force" (NZDF 2002). This led to the disbanding of the air combat wing which had been the subject of a good deal of public discussion and debate between 1997 and 2001, as the planned purchase of new strike aircraft was first agreed by the National Government then scrapped by the incoming Labour Government. It also resulted in the purchase of new radios, Light Armoured Vehicles, and Light Operational Vehicles for the army, a multi-role vessel, and offshore and inshore patrol vessels for the Navy, and upgraded surveillance equipment and helicopters for the Air Force.

Along with a reorganisation of capability, the NZDF and the Ministry of Defence also underwent "major organisational change" (NZDF 2002). The most significant change was the establishment of the Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand at Trentham, with the permanent appointment of a Commander Joint Forces, Major-General Martyn Dunne. This was called "a major step towards enhancing jointery at the operational level" (NZDF 2002). Before HQJFNZ was established, all operational deployments would be negotiated between the heads of the three services—the Army, Navy and Air Force. A commander for each operation would then be nominated, who would need to negotiate any subsequent changes with the three services, as well as with the commanders of any other concurrent operations. The HQJFNZ model, on the other hand, put all operationally deployable forces under the control of Commander Joint Forces, who could authorise deployments directly and who could move resources between deployments. The heads of the three services were left with the responsibility to "raise, train and sustain" their forces, rather than direct them on operational tasks (Confidential Interview 5).

The Ministry of Defence and the Headquarters of NZDF were also reorganised, with joint policy and public relations branches. This helped synchronise Defence/NZDF input into Whole of Government strategy and day-to-day policy management of issues such as the East Timor deployment.

An analysis of New Zealand's military involvement in East Timor, both in terms of the shape of that involvement up until 2002 and the changes over this period benefits from an organisational behaviour analysis. Using Model II, we are able to see that the Defence deployment was both facilitated and constrained by organisational structure and routines. The constraints came from organisational routines which focused on single services, opaque funding mechanisms and poor interaction with the policy planning process. The successes came from the inherent advantages of military culture for deploying overseas operations and, in time, from structural changes that saw better management of both the policy input and operational oversight of the deployments.

Self-evidently, the military capabilities a government deploys are those that have been built up over many years; the government cannot deploy capabilities it does not have. Military capabilities thus become perceived as almost permanent fixtures (such that cutting a capability such as combat aircraft then is considered radical change). Defence historians John Crawford and Glyn Harper even structure their account of the deployment in *Operation East Timor* in organisational terms centred on each specific military capability, beginning with the Navy, then the Air Force operations, then the various infantry battalions, armoured vehicle operations and support operations such as the medical teams (Crawford and Harper 2001).

Within the structures, standard operating procedures also constrain government action. A key criticism of New Zealand's INTERFET deployment was around the delays in sending troops due to slowness in insuring all personnel had adequate vaccinations. This showed a failure of an existing routine (medical preparations) to meet the requirements of changed circumstances where speedy deployment was of the essence. But, throughout the deployment, organisational structures, routines and standard operating procedures constrained decision in many instances. For example, the UN made a strong pitch for New Zealand to keep its Air Force helicopters in East Timor after it withdrew its Army battalion in late 2002, with lobbying from Deputy SRGS Dennis McNamara and the Australian Deputy Force Commander of the UN's Peacekeeping Force (MFAT cable C27826/WLN 22 March 2002, letter from DFC, 3 April 2002 - MFAT Archives). RNZAF 3 Squadron had only limited personnel, all of whom had served in East Timor already, on tours of duty of only three months (instead of six for the

rest of the NZDF). This meant that by late 2006, many were on their third or fourth three-month tour of duty. This created a sense of fatigue within the Squadron which mitigated against an extension.

The question of when and how to draw down the army battalion also posed a challenge for the routines and SOPs of the NZDF. It became clear in 2001 that even upon independence, East Timor would not be able to provide for its own security, and a post independence Peacekeeping Force (PKF) would be needed. As I have outlined in the preceding chapter, Australia made it clear that it saw a continued New Zealand presence as vital. One suggestion was to keep a smaller contingent (perhaps a company sized unit of around 100) within an ANZAC battalion to be commanded by Australia and based in Bobonaro District, that is, area on the northern part of the border with Indonesia. Although politically, this was attractive to those who seeking to foster closer ties Defence with Australia, at the operational level it was not supported. The chief reasons given were that the logistics support requirement (the logistics 'tail') for a company sized deployment was not a great deal smaller than for a whole battalion: smaller deployments hit up against negative economies of scale. Furthermore, some questioned how easily New Zealand troops could fit in under Australian command, when they had already showed a quite different kind of peacekeeping methodology in Cova Lima District (Confidential Interview 4). Overall, Defence officials favoured the continuation of the 660 strong battalion rather than trying to develop a whole new set of SOPs for working as part of an ANZAC battalion for a six month period.

Some limitations in NZDF planning capabilities also constrained government action. While NZDF saw itself as an arm of foreign policy, its ability to interact with policy makers was hampered by poor information systems. The division between the three single services, the division between the NZDF and the Ministry of Defence and the unique budgeting mechanisms within the NZDF meant, as one MFAT official commented:

*The Ministry of Defence could never get the uniformed personnel to give them a straight answer about the feasibility and costs of deployments. They needed this information to put in Cabinet*

*papers to satisfy Treasury... It was not a question of attitude, nor an unwillingness to be helpful but a lack of capability to generate the figures (Confidential Interview 4).*

This meant that NZDF sometimes did not access money available, simply because it did not provide the information on which greater allocations could be justified.

The use of military language was another organisational constraint. Another MFAT official commented that “their terminology didn’t help their cause” and that Defence officials struggled to understand that “they needed to demystify things” if they were to win support from Ministers and the public (Confidential interview 7). It is clear that Defence officials struggled with this challenge; for example Defence Cabinet papers routinely refer to the “RW element” as shorthand for the “Rotary Wing Element” when using the term “Air Force Helicopters” may have been a good deal more comprehensible to busy Ministers.

The reorganisation of the NZDF structure shows how changes in organisational routine can impact on government choices and actions. The establishment of the permanent Joint Forces Headquarters in 2001 was a major step forward—a senior Defence official, for example, said that its creation was the major factor behind the feasibility of extending the deployment from three rotations to six. Before HQJFNZ was set up, the three services operated as “single fiefdoms” and command was divided—for example for INTERFET in 1999 the New Zealand forces first came under the command of HQ INTERFET—in effect Australia— then under the command of the Land Component Commander (LCC) who was designated Commander Joint Forces East Timor. Nevertheless, the LCC did not command the Navy or Air Force elements, which remained under Australian command. While New Zealand appointed a Senior National Officer on the ground in East Timor to coordinate and control all NZDF elements including sea and air components, the Senior National Officer did not have a single joint headquarters in New Zealand to whom he could report, so his ability to effect changes from a distance was limited. Moreover, as the ‘operational tempo’ of NZDF increased with deployments to Afghanistan and elsewhere, the Commander Joint Forces East Timor had limited jurisdiction over the availability of resources to the deployment (Confidential Interview 5).



Once HQJFNZ was established, Defence officials suggest that the ability to manage further rotations was greatly enhanced: as one senior official said “we could be operational all over the world at once” (Confidential interview 5). It also meant that deployment times were greatly reduced—from the two months notice required at the time of the INTERFET deployment to a matter of days. Much of this gain in speed was because assessments of the situation, practical options for action and costings could be presented to Ministers much faster and didn’t require separate negotiations with each service and with heads of other operations.

The impact of merging some of the policy functions of the NZDF and the Ministry of Defence headquarters (including International Defence Relations) also had positive benefits for government choice and decision. One MFAT official commented that Defence’s interagency engagement “improved during the East Timor deployment” and regular meetings between the MFAT Deputy Secretary in charge of security issues and the Chief of Defence Force were instituted. The result of the organisational changes and new routines was that by the end of the deployment Defence officials were “very effective and very inclusive” (Confidential interview 7).

The importance to NZDF of the institution-to-institution linkages between NZDF and the Australian Defence Force played a crucial role in determining the scope and duration of New Zealand deployment. Despite regular assessments that more than three rotations would be administratively difficult for NZDF, in the event six rotations were stood up. A key influence on the three decisions to extend the deployment was the importance of what the ADF believed was necessary—as we have outlined in the preceding chapter.

Despite all organisational and institutional constraints on the NZDF deployment, it has to be concluded that overall the deployment was managed very effectively. Issues that might have derailed a deployment of another government agency—such as the complaints about soldiers’ pay and conditions which were even noted in the report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee visit to East Timor (New Zealand House of Representatives 2000) were not, in the event, a major problem. Indeed, the deployment, management on the ground and return to New Zealand of six army

battalions and many rotations of RNZAF 3 Squadron helicopters, as well as UN military observers, National Command Element staff and Peacekeeping Force headquarters staff was managed without major problems. Even potentially divisive events such as the deaths of five New Zealand peacekeepers did not destabilise the deployment: indeed they can be argued to have only cemented institutional and political support.

The explanation for this success lies squarely within the Organisational Behaviour Model. The NZDF is set up for overseas deployments. Its personnel are trained to expect them and enjoy serving in them. Their families expect to see them go. No negotiation with staff unions is required, and complaints about terms and conditions do not disrupt the strong organisational culture of command. Soldiers and officers are motivated by a strong sense of service to their country, and the NZDF enjoys popular support for its role overseas. Moreover, the military has its own systems of rewards, including promotions and medals, that does not depend on fickle budget allocations. This organisational motivation of patriotism and medallic rewards sits outside much mainstream political bargaining and thus allows the NZDF to operate successfully whether or not it is winning in the 'pulling and hauling' game. The international uniformity of military culture also means deployments easily meet expectations of host countries and the UN: everyone knows what a soldier is expected to do and how they are expected to behave, and provided they do not transgress seriously, everyone is happy. As discussed later in this chapter, for deployments of Customs and Corrections officers and even Police, there were no such generic, pre-ordained expectations: their roles were much more open to interpretation and therefore criticism.

In some respects, NZDF was seen to have superior routines to those of other Peacekeeping Force contributors, including at times, Australia. One example often cited is the Atambua rescue in 2000, where four RNZAF helicopters flew across the border into West Timor to the town of Atambua to rescue UN workers who were under attack from militia (four UN staff were killed in the attack). The rescue was difficult in that it required flying into Indonesian airspace and going beyond the agreed area of operation for the UN Peacekeeping Force. While the Australia Defence Force had superior airlift capability with its Black Hawk helicopters, which, based at Balibo, were a good deal closer to Atambua, they were not able to agree to conduct the rescue. The RNZAF, on the

other hand, sought permission from the Senior National Officer, who in turn sought permission from HQ NZDF in New Zealand. Appropriate political clearance was given quickly (it is understood by the Prime Minister) and the rescue was completed quickly and successfully, with more than 40 UN staff flown to safety in East Timor. New Zealand was commended by the UN and by Australia, and indeed subsequently the RNZAF 3 Squadron was awarded the Australian meritorious unit citation for its service in East Timor—the first and only time an NZDF unit had received such an award from Australia (Confidential interview 3). The example of the Atambua rescue shows that routines are not problematic *per se*, as all military operations require them—in particular, authorisation through an appropriate chain of command, and implementation according to legal, tactical and safety guidelines. When routines are simple and flexible, they can facilitate effective operations and successful outcomes; if routines are less flexible, opportunities are lost.

## ***New Zealand Police***

The New Zealand Police is a service of both sworn and non-sworn staff, which, like the military, and the diplomatic service, tends to draw for the most part on experienced officers who have joined at the most junior ranks and progressed within the organisation. Indeed, progression to management roles is somewhat slower than in the military, which has separate officer and soldier ranks; in the Police, an officer must progress through all the ranks, which means that senior officers are often older than their military counterparts. On the other hand, the police work under a tradition of constabulary independence which means that officers at junior levels are used to exercising more personal judgement on a routine basis.

New Zealand Police as an organisation is governed by the Police Act and has primary responsibility for law and order within New Zealand. Offshore policing does not feature in the Police Act, nor at the time of the East Timor deployment was international policing given specific mention in any organisational mandate, nor was it funded through any specific discrete budget. Officers for overseas missions are drawn from the eight

Police Districts, rather than any specific international deployment pool.<sup>35</sup> This creates some tensions, as those managing the deployment must negotiate with District Commanders for each deployment. As a senior police officer commented recently, “While the backfilling of staff occurs ... [when there is] funding provided, the recruitment lag means usually a gap of at least nine months before a replacement is provided to a Police district” (McCardle 2006).

Police terms and conditions are also negotiated with the Police Association: given that overseas operations are exceptions to normal police work, up until now they are subject to operation-specific industrial relations negotiations in a way that military and diplomatic assignments are not.

While police officers are equally motivated by a sense of service to their country as military personnel, their expectation is not normally that this service would be done overseas. Their families may not be prepared for the separation. There can also be concerns about the public support for overseas police work, especially as concerns about domestic crime continue to rise. McCardle notes the concern over “...the optics of (even temporarily) removing frontline staff to conduct overseas work. This in the past has attracted a degree of pressure especially from areas where there are perceived shortfalls in local policing services” (McCardle 2006).

On the practical front, there are issues over logistical support, questions about whether to deploy with weapons (and if so, over what weapons and what training would be needed) and complexities associated with the requirement to understand the local legal system and to manage interpretation processes where required.

New Zealand Police, as an organisation, has also not historically been set up as a policy agency, but rather it exists as a uniformed service designed to ensure law and order. While there is some policy capacity in the Office of the Commissioner within Police National Headquarters, this is small (although it has grown in recent years). There is no Ministry of Police comparable to the Ministry of Defence, and the policy capacity in the Ministry of Justice is not mandated to cover international policing.

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<sup>35</sup> In 2006 NZ Police was preparing plans for an permanent international deployment group into which officers would be seconded for two years each. At the time of writing this structure, which would require extra resources, had yet to be approved by the Government.

The Police deployment to East Timor can be seen as organisational output. The deployment of New Zealand Police to East Timor in 1999 as part of UNAMET represented one of the first international deployments since Cyprus in 1967. Having been withdrawn during the 1999 violence, the ten officers were returned to East Timor under INTERFET then UNTAET command (Crawford and Harper 2001). New Zealand Police then deployed a further four rotations of police officers to work as part of the UNTAET Civilian Police force (CIVPOL), with an additional two funded bilaterally to work as trainers at the East Timor Police training college. Police deployments formed an integral part of the UNTAET mission, alongside military. By December 2001, there were a total of 1,113 Civilian Police deployed from 40 countries (UNTAET 2001).

From the start, many if not most of the security issues that faced East Timor were internal security and justice issues rather than external threats. These included investigating serious crimes of 1999, dealing with militia who might return from West Timor (and East Timorese seeking vengeance on them) and dealing with new gangs that arose in the power vacuum—what the UN termed ‘issue motivated groups’. Alongside these issues that were specific to the East Timor conflict was a whole range of more routine community policing issues, including high rates of domestic violence. Although there were serious militia incursions into the border districts in 2000, by 2001 it was clear that the external threat from organised and coordinated West Timor-Based groups was declining. Devotion of UN and New Zealand resources to policing, then, would have been the logical response to a desire to ensure East Timorese security and stability during the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections, the lead up to independence in May 2002 and the first months of the infant government. Nevertheless, New Zealand did not send a large police contingent and it was withdrawn at the end of 2001. This suggests that organisational issues formed a part of the basis for the decision.

The first set of organisational constraints related to NZ police themselves. There are inherent complexities in the deployment of police, and this was certainly true for the New Zealand Police deployment to East Timor. All of the practical problems of finding staff, and preparing them adequately for policing in a foreign country existed for the East Timor deployment. Moreover once they arrived, NZ Police were confronted with the fact that the justice sector infrastructure was nonexistent, the legal system chaotic

(Strohmeyer 2001), and the language context complicated by the concurrent use of Tetum, Bahasa Indonesian Portuguese and English, as well as thirteen local languages.

The new international role in East Timor also did not sit easily with the mission and legal mandate of New Zealand Police, which is entirely domestically focused. There was not, at the time, any Output Class covering international policing so no way for NZ Police to be measured or rewarded for success in carrying out this role.<sup>36</sup> Organising funding was also an issue, as NZ Police costs are funded from Vote: Justice, with no particular provision for overseas deployments. This meant special Cabinet appropriations were required. The bureaucratic discussions and draft Cabinet papers recommending the final deployment of NZ Police in 2001 show clearly that this funding tension between domestic and international policing impacted on the recommendations made to Ministers (discussed in greater detail in the next chapter).

The lack of organisational capacity within New Zealand Police for involvement in peacekeeping missions was also felt in Wellington. New Zealand Police lacked dedicated policy staff in Wellington to participate in interagency processes, and to draft and consult on key Cabinet papers. As one MFAT official noted in an email “[MFAT] should send police a bill for writing their Cabinet papers for them” (MFAT Archives 2001n).

While the NZ Police had its own organisational constraints at home, at the same time as we have outlined in Chapter three, the UN’s civilian police (UN CIVPOL) was not deemed a success by any of the key commentators. The overall strategy for policing was weak: there were more than 37 countries involved, there was no effective standardisation of policing and there was no comprehensive plan to ensure consistent capacity building for the East Timorese police service at the same time as the UN maintained executive policing functions. With most police serving a six month tour, and with no continuity even of nationalities in specific positions or at specific stations (at least in the first two years of UNTAET), it is hardly surprising that the effectiveness of the UN police was limited.

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<sup>36</sup> New Zealand Government Agencies agree Output Classes with their Ministers: key performance indicators are specified for each output, and annual reports are required to state achievements in each area— see for example, NZ Police Departmental Forecast June 2000 and Annual Report June 2001 at [www.police.govt.nz](http://www.police.govt.nz) ]

As with other police, the New Zealand Police replicated New Zealand organisational routines in East Timor. Indeed, within the UN CIVPOL, each station developed its own SOPs, usually based on the routines of the home country of the key personnel. These resulted in wide variation in the definition of and response to crime. For example, many police from developing countries were not accustomed to treating family violence as a crime. While New Zealand routines were perceived by the UN to be better than most, the weakness in the overall organisational behaviour of UN CIVPOL led to poor outcomes, and impacted on the decision making of police-contributing nations. The New Zealand representative commented that “the CIVPOL performance in East Timor is fairly lacklustre. Until the UN changes the way the CIVPOL are deployed, it will always be difficult for New Zealand Police to make a completely effective contribution” (MFAT Archives 2001r).

Given the constraints of NZ police’s structure and mandate, and given the poor design of the UN Police intervention, the withdrawal of the New Zealand Police in 2001 can be explained in organisational terms in two ways. First, it represented a return to the ordinary NZ Police repertoire of activities, that is, focused on New Zealand domestic issues. Despite the Government’s desire to see security maintained within East Timor and despite the fact that most analyses agreed that by late 2001, this security was more an issue of effective policing of internal threats than military-provided security from an external enemy, nevertheless it was decided to extend the NZDF deployment and wind up the NZ police deployment. The second organisational explanation is that NZ Police, MFAT and others looking at the situation decided that the poor structure of UN policing, and in particular, the absence of effective strategy, standard operating procedures and regular routines (including for training) meant that it was not possible, organisationally, for NZ Police to make an effective contribution to overall outcomes. For both of these explanations (which can both be true at once) it is possible to see organisational issues creating an important diversion from a direct rational logic for intervention.

## ***The New Zealand Customs Service, the Department of Corrections, The Department for Courts***

Like the NZ Police, the NZ Customs Service has a domestic focused mandate; this was especially true in the period before September 11 2001, when the key focus of the organisation was collecting tariff revenue from incoming goods and ensuring contraband was not imported. While there had been shorter deployments overseas for specific tasks, NZ Customs had not engaged in longer term assignments, nor in designing customs systems for other countries and training/capacity building their staff to run these. NZ Customs Service also did not have any specific budget for its East Timor deployment (Confidential Interview 8).

The Department of Corrections was in a similar position: it had no mandate for offshore prison management operations, no experience in setting up systems from scratch (including infrastructure) and no budget for such work. The Department of Corrections also had a highly unionised workforce and a history of industrial disputes. Along with Customs and Corrections, the Department for Courts also was involved in East Timor and also lacked a mandate and budget for this work.

The nature of the smaller scale involvements of the NZ Customs Service, the Department of Corrections and the Department of Courts within the East Timor intervention also benefits from an organisational behaviour analysis. In all these case (to varying degrees), the institutional mandates, cultures and routines were not especially suited to overseas activity, let alone deployment of personnel, and thus served to constrain the participation. None of these departments had a substantive role in East Timor at the time of independence and organisational limitations need were significant factors in this.

For the New Zealand Customs Service, for example, deploying people overseas had been done before only on a very ad hoc basis for specific tasking (two officers had been deployed to one Pacific country on three month assignments to, for example, help install new computer software) or on a few permanent, three to four year liaison officer postings based in New Zealand Embassies. The East Timor deployment represented a



new departure for the service. When the first contingent of five officers was mobilised in December 1999, all were drawn from the team working at Auckland International Airport, mainly because “they were the ones available over the Christmas holidays” (Confidential interview 8). No process or funding for backfilling their positions had been agreed, so the deployment left a considerable gap in the team in New Zealand. Subsequent deployments faced similar constraints. Although the funding for the Customs deployment was eventually taken over by NZODA, the Customs Service lacked a strategy for international engagement which might guide the organisation in policy terms and organisationally when considering such deployments (such a strategy was in fact developed after the East Timor deployment). This meant that all aspects of the deployment—consultation mechanisms in Wellington, funding processes, reporting requirements, terms and conditions of those deployed—all had to be agreed on an ad hoc basis as the deployments were mobilised. When the additional complexity of dealing with the UN bureaucracy was added, the administrative burden of the deployment became severe. In some cases, officers simply gave up seeking to claim their entitlements—three Customs officers for example were only paid their outstanding UN allowances from 2001 in 2003, upon MFAT intervention (Confidential Interview 8).

The Department of Corrections faced a similar situation. Unlike the Customs Service, Corrections had no overseas deployment experience at all. The decision to deploy prison officers was made quickly, with the first contingent being mobilised in early 2000. The Department of Corrections moreover had to manage a workforce that was highly unionised and somewhat disputatious so the Timor deployment was characterised throughout by arguments about money. NZODA paid the officers’ salaries at first but subsequently this was taken over by UNTAET, leading to further organizational complications. There were times when it was unclear which organisation was paying which costs. The requirement for the New Zealand agencies to navigate around the extremely complex, ever-changing mercurial UN bureaucratic systems proved a major drain on the foreign policy resource.

Nevertheless, the Corrections Department pay and conditions were very generous by New Zealand standards. As one MFAT official pointed out, a corrections officer in East Timor was taking home around NZ\$160,000–\$180,000 per year once all the

allowances were included. A soldier, patrolling on the border area, by contrast, could expect an income of around \$70,000 (MFAT Archives 2001q). This example shows the power of existing organisational routines in determining resource allocations: at no point did the New Zealand Government formally decide that a prison officer was worth two and a half times as much as a soldier, yet that was the net result.

The role and functions of Police, Customs and Corrections officers on the ground moreover, remained rather unspecified throughout the UNTAET administration. Much was made of the term “capacity building” (especially by NZODA, which funded a good proportion of the New Zealand agencies’ costs, and by the UN at the general level) but few knew in practice what this meant. Many officers on the ground saw their role as operating a customs service, prison service or police force on behalf of the territory, while others saw the function as training their Timorese counterparts. Those interviewed for this thesis agreed that the predisposition, especially in the earlier deployments, was to ‘do’ rather than ‘train’ (Confidential Interviews 1,2,8). In this respect, it is easy to see organisational routines clicking into place, with officers who were not trained as trainers naturally defaulting to replicating their New Zealand Standard Operating Procedures in the East Timor environment. Although capacity building may have been the desired outcome, and everyone accepted that having New Zealanders run the basic government systems in East Timor was not sustainable, the prevailing ‘organisational logic’ in many cases overrode this. In some cases, standard terms of deployment also mitigated against effective capacity building. As one official commented:

*They ran the prisons well but were less effective at training the Timorese. This was mainly due to too short rotations. Re-rotation of some officers would have been helpful, but there was an attitude that these officers had already “had their turn” (Confidential interview 1).*

Like the Police deployments, a key weakness in the New Zealand intervention in Customs, Corrections and Courts was the weakness generally of the UN transitional administration’s approach to nation building. The remark of one official was:

*UNTAET had no real strategic planning. It worked on short timeframes. I’m not convinced that there was any coherent overall strategy. The Constitution and civic education programmes went ahead, but were procedural: there was no master plan. The UN was reactive. Wheels were*

*reinvented through staff churn. The Timorese and UN insisted on Portuguese speaking advisers so many of the good people left. The UN didn't work hard enough to translate key documents and processes into Tetum and Bahasa. Australian Timorese were discriminated against compared to Portuguese Timorese. "Timorisation" was a good concept in principle but no-one really addressed the lack of good Timorese counterparts (Confidential interview 1).*

The end of these New Zealand deployments, seen through an organisational lens, reflects in some cases an East Timorese dissatisfaction with the Standard Operating Procedures that New Zealand offered. In contrast to a Model I analysis, which suggests that the Timorese leadership chose other nationalities to fill these roles for strategic reasons, a Model II analysis suggests it was not always that the new Timorese leadership preferred lusophone countries' help to help from New Zealand, but rather that in some cases, the Timorese leadership had an issue with the specific systems that some of the New Zealand agencies had introduced. The English language basis of the New Zealand-established systems, for example, was clearly seen by some in the Timorese leadership as inappropriate for independent East Timor, but the desire to see others take over the assistance was more than simply a question of language. In Courts, it was clear that the New Zealand system was incompatible with the Portuguese based legal system chosen by the Timorese government. Moreover as one official commented "they were responding to ad hoc requests so their assistance was not integrated with the broader sector" (Confidential interview 1). In prisons too, it was clear that the East Timorese leadership did not see the New Zealand prison management routines and Standard Operating Procedures as compatible with their view of appropriate correctional approaches, as the New Zealand management style was considered too 'soft' (Confidential interview 1 Interview with Hon Matt Robson, 7 February 2007).

The organizational logic that led the New Zealand agencies to simply replicate their existing systems in East Timor had within it the seeds of its own demise. The inability (or unwillingness, often for good reasons—such as protection of the human rights of prisoners) to sufficiently adapt organisational systems to a different cultural context risked having the entire system eventually rejected.

## ***Coordination Mechanisms across the New Zealand Government***

In the 1999 edition of the *Essence of Decision*, Allison and Zelikow augment the Model II chapter with some comments about “interactive complexity” and note that interagency coordination “create(s) superior capacity for coping with new strategic circumstances but the potential for dangerous dysfunctionality exists” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 159). The revised version does not make any specific propositions about the “complexity of joint action” however.

In the time period of this case study, mechanisms for interagency coordination on foreign policy issues were weak. The Officials Domestic and External Security Committee (ODESC) which is attended by departmental heads or their nominees (e.g. a Deputy Secretary) still had a more narrow intelligence focus and relied on close relationships and few written papers. It was not used to discuss complex multi-agency operations in any systematic way. At working level, there was no regular interagency group on East Timor, although Watch Groups were convened to discuss intelligence assessments and agree threat levels. MFAT’s Special Adviser on East Timor—Julie MacKenzie, chiefly conducted MFAT’s negotiations with other agencies and liaison with Ministers’ offices as required. While the Development Programme Manager in MFAT’s Development Cooperation Division kept in regular touch with key operational people in the Department of Corrections, Department for Courts, Customs and Police, as NZODA was funding all or part of each of these deployments. Some regular meetings between senior MFAT and Defence officials were instituted later in the period.

Operationally, the activities of the different agencies were for the most part, quite independent. While Corrections, Customs and Courts all had some or all of their costs funded by NZODA, they did not in practice ‘report’ to NZODA in the way that a development consultant hired to deliver an aid programme might be expected to. Indeed, trying to persuade colleagues in these Departments of the need for detailed reporting was a key challenge for MFAT officials (Confidential interviews 2, 7). Another official commented on the lack of a good mutual understanding of organisational culture and standard operating practices between Defence and NZODA officials—this became

evident when NZDF began using ODA money for many small projects in its area of operation (Confidential Interview 1, see also Hull 2005).

An organisational behaviour analysis has its greatest explanatory power when it is used to look at the overall allocation of government effort and resources in this case study. What becomes clear is that each agency's engagement, budget and resources were decided separately. I have commented above that at no point did the government decide that a Corrections officer's contribution was worth two and a half times that of a soldier's. I have also noted that the decisions to withdraw the Police, Customs, Corrections and Courts personnel were not made as part of a trade-off with other agencies, but rather due to factors in each of those departments or with each specific deployment. The challenge of this compartmentalisation was evident to Ministers. Matt Robson said, "There's resistance to moving resources between institutions—all that 'silo' stuff is real" (Interview with Hon Matt Robson, 7 February 2007). Hon Phil Goff has also recently said:

*Our expenditures were overwhelmingly in the Defence area, although we found niches in Customs, Police and prisons. Our resources on peacekeeping were generous but we were somewhat stingy on ODA. A lot more needed to happen on the development front. There was some partial compensation in that a lot of other countries were giving large amounts of aid,—this is true in Afghanistan too—but it wasn't until Solomon Islands that we got our aid for a single country into double digits (Interview with Hon Phil Goff, 13 February 2007).*

An MFAT official made similar comments:

*Government funding is always very compartmentalised. There were disproportionately large contributions from some smaller agencies such as Customs. Overall, if we'd had a fraction of the resources for aid and policing [that went into military peacekeeping] we could have achieved so much more. But there are always limitations on what you can expect in terms of asking governments to decide things in terms of the "big picture" (Confidential Interview 1).*

When Ministers did try to move resources from one organisation to another, they invariably hit a brick wall. One example of this was when Minister for ODA Matt Robson suggested Defence find from within its own resources the funding for post-independence contribution to the UNAMET peacekeeping force, rather than asking for new money. Robson suggested that Defence spending be reprioritised and any new

money given instead to ODA. Robson was not acknowledging, however, the power of organisational routines associated with budget allocations. Departments are allocated a certain Vote, or budget limit, each year. Money is not usually taken off one Vote allocation and given to another in the middle of a financial year just because a specific issue arises. Even if the government is being asked to assign currently unallocated money, the organisational silos remain fairly concrete. For example, the administrative feasibility of the defence proposal was already assured, whereas it may have been more administratively difficult to deliver extra development assistance by simply allocating more money, absent a specific proposal. (Indeed, if there was scope for a greater ODA effort, the question is why NZODA officials did not request extra money.)

## ***Allison's Model II propositions tested***

In the final section of this chapter, an evaluation of the usefulness of Allison's propositions for the organisational behaviour model is attempted.

***Government will choose options where the capability to deliver already exists rather than create new capability:*** This was true in the case study: deployment of military was organisationally and administratively easier than deployment of, for example, Police or Corrections officers, even though the security situation suggested that internal security threats, including those related to the prisons, were rather more pressing than external threats from West Timor. However the fact that Police, Customs, Corrections and Courts all embraced the new offshore work (at least at first) suggests that there was scope to develop new capabilities, albeit in a limited way.

***Organisational priorities will shape government decisions:*** This proposition does not always hold true in the case of the military deployment, where for example, the organisational priority was to draw down after three rotations so that the NZDF could focus on introduction into service of the new equipment secured in the Defence Capability Review, whereas the Government sought to continue the military presence at the request of the UN and Australia—the latter priority won out in the event. On the other hand, organisational priorities of the NZ Police do seem to have played a major role in deciding to end the police deployment in 2001. Within MFAT, organisational priorities mitigated against opening a permanent diplomatic mission in Dili but the government

decided to do this anyway. Nevertheless organisational priorities did ensure the office was set up to be small and temporary, even if it later became permanent. The NZODA programme certainly reflected organisational priorities, especially in the fixing of a four year strategy to manage the programme and constrain the addition of ad hoc projects at Ministers' request, as well as in the choice of administratively simple programmes such as emergency relief and contributions to trust funds and continuation of ongoing programmes such as community development fund grants and the scholarships.

***Decisions will be implemented in a way that reflects pre-existing routine:*** Of all Allison's propositions, this seems the most self-evidently true. Military decisions are always implemented in a way than reflects pre-existing routines and training, for example. Nevertheless the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> battalions showed some innovation in developing new areas of civil-military relations which showed that old routines do get incrementally adapted. For Police, Customs and Corrections staff, pre-existing routines definitely were reflected in their work: 'capacity building' was a challenge so they tended to revert to 'delivery' of a service, along the lines of how these services were delivered in New Zealand. For MFAT and NZODA, pre-existing routines—e.g. the functioning of the diplomatic office and systems employed in the management of the ODA programme—were central to the implementation of government decisions.

***Failures will occur when leaders neglect calculations of administrative feasibility:*** It is hard to assess from whether leaders did neglect calculations of administrative feasibility, and whether there were consequences from this. What is clear is that the military in particular struggled to make accurate calculations of cost and feasibility in the first place, at least before the Headquarters Joint Forces was in place. In this respect, the mobilisation of six consecutive battalions when the NZDDF had initially advised that only three would be possible may reflect an earlier (and in the event inaccurate) calculation on the part of NZDF, or it may reflect a Government decision to override organisational concerns. In any case, it is hard to argue that mobilising six battalions represents a foreign policy failure. For Police, Customs and Corrections, it seems that questions of administrative difficulties arose (such as negotiations with staff over terms and conditions, finding suitable personnel etc) but these were overcome, and did not in the end prove insurmountable problems. For MFAT, the lack of a dedicated

budget for the Dili office might have suggested such an office was not feasible, and the financial constraints did limit its size and scope but in the event the Government got the diplomatic mission that it wanted, despite officials' concerns over administrative feasibility.

***Change will be limited and incremental:*** This proposition is not true for the case study at the macro level but does hold true for routine implementation. The period from 2000 to 2002 saw change in the way NZDF was organised (at the macro level) as well as in the management of New Zealand Official Development Assistance. These changes were neither limited nor incremental.<sup>37</sup> However at the level of day to day operations, both the aid programme and the military deployment were managed according to long standing routines. For the deployment of Police, Customs and Corrections officers, it is hard to assess whether any change was incremental or not: certainly the deployments represented a departure from tradition for these organisations, yet they did not radically change their organisational cultures, missions or mandates in the process. For the diplomatic engagement, the 2000 Strategy Framework shows a tendency to see the East Timor issue through a historical lens and radical change is not suggested. Moreover, the serious pressure of visits, both inwards and outwards, and key meetings in New York and Dili meant that a "first principles" assessment of policy and strategy for each visit was unlikely.

***Long range planning will be disregarded:*** This proposition does seem to hold true for this case study: MFAT's effort at setting a future strategy for the East Timor intervention was in the event rather vague, and did not pin down very many specific future policies. Moreover, the 2000 Strategy Framework did not feature in the plans of other Departments (e.g. Defence, Police or Customs) nor was it even cited in the comprehensive documentation that accompanied the 2001 ODA agreement, an agreement concluded by another division of MFAT. The attempt at medium range planning in the four year ODA strategy in 2001 was also overtaken by events and organisational changes on both sides. Officials concluded afterwards that they might have better worked on shorter timeframes.

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<sup>37</sup> They do fit with a tendency, evident since the 1980s, of periodic radical restructuring in the New Zealand public service, a phenomena that may not be evident in, say, Allison's USA.



***Organisations will act in ‘imperialist’ ways:*** The evidence for this is not especially strong in the case study: no organisations sought to take over responsibilities from others, although it could be argued that MFAT viewed the separation of the NZODA function to a semi-autonomous body as a loss of territory. While Customs, Corrections, Courts and Police initially embraced the chance to expand their fields of operations to include offshore work, it appears that these organisations were also happy to end their involvement after a reasonable period. MFAT found itself taking on a new role of whole of government coordination on strategy for East Timor, but this does not appear to have been pursued for any particularly imperialist reasons, but rather at Ministerial direction.

***Directed change by governments is uncommon:*** Again, this proposition is questionable: the changes to the NZDF and to NZODA were directed by governments and had significant impacts, but as we have noted above, in the implementation of government decisions, governments did not (and could not) closely direct how the organisations would carry out their instructions. This does not mean, however, that the Government was unhappy with the implementation of its decisions. Overall impressions were that Ministers were satisfied, the media was reporting on developments in the positive light and the general public reaction to the government’s engagement was good.

## ***Conclusions***

This chapter has shown that an organisational behaviour model can shed some light on aspects of government decision that a rational actor model leaves unexplained. This is especially true at the level of implementation of decisions, and in day-to-day management of policy, rather more than at the level of the major decisions about deployments. Organisational routines were in evidence in the actions of MFAT, including in how it viewed East Timor through an Indonesia lens and how it crafted a useful strategic vague in its forward-looking strategy, to cover against organisational and political change. Organisational factors such as belonging to the Core Group in New York and the pressure of visits also determined policy outcomes, and organisational agendas were clearly a factor in the decision to open only a small and temporary office in Dili in 2000. For the ODA programme, organisational factors were central to explaining

decisions, such as the programme shape, why sectors such as emergency relief and governance were favoured and why modalities such as trust funds were used. Organisational factors provide crucial historical context to the 2001 ODA strategy for East Timor. Likewise for Defence, organisational factors were an important backdrop to decision, and explain some of the successes of the peacekeeping deployment. For the smaller deployments of Police, Customs, Corrections and Courts, these were also an important part of the story.

When Allison's propositions are tested, however, it becomes clear that while organisational factors were important in all of the foreign policy decisions, it is not easy to say exactly in what ways these were the determining factors. Moreover, several of Allison's other propositions do not in fact hold true, for example the suggestion of automatic organisational imperialism, and his contention that directed change is uncommon.

In the conclusion to this thesis we will assess how well the Organisational Behaviour model compares to Allison's two other paradigms, and whether it provides a helpful framework for drawing 'lessons learnt' for the process of foreign policy formulation, decision and implementation.

## Chapter Four : New Zealand's involvement in East Timor using a Governmental Politics Model

The third of Allison's three models or paradigms is the Governmental politics. Under this framework, decisions are "intra-national political resultants" rather than the rational choice of any one decider. Decisions reflect the way the political game is structured, the players involved, the "action channels" used and the timeframes and deadlines involved. Decisions are not single responses to particular foreign policy problems but rather a "collage" of independent decisions, agreements and understandings which are made in response to immediate issues and the longer term context. There are two major organising concepts for Model III: the players and the structure of the decision-making process.

***The players:*** Allison's model asks: what are their advantages and handicaps, their obligations, their personalities? What are the players' perceptions, preferences and stands? What determines the players' impact on the decision? An examination of the players in any governmental political process involves looking at individual and organizational stands, as well as individuals' bargaining advantages and willingness to use their advantages. It also means looking at who controls information and process, what other concurrent issues are being decided by the key players and how other impinging factors such as timeframes and deadlines affect players' views.

***The structure of the decision process or "political game":*** this involves looking at the broader international context as well as the internal decision-making pathways (or "action channels"), arenas, structures, deadlines and budget processes. It also involved examining how the anticipated implementation of decisions might affect the process. The dominant inference pattern of Allison's third model is that if the analyst exposes the political game operating beneath the surface, then the real reasons for governmental decision and action will become clear. Allison then goes on to make several general propositions. First, he argues that preferences and stands of individuals can have significant impact, and that the advantages of individuals will depend on the action channels used. Secondly, the contention is that decisions and actions are seldom the result

of one individual's intention, nor do they reflect a holistic doctrine or coordinated strategy: rather, they reflect mixed motives. Thirdly, decisions are not a unified response to a problem, but rather they represent a response to the broader context plus the immediate decision at hand. Government action, then, is a collage of incremental decisions. A fourth contention is the so-called Miles' Law, that is, "where you stand depends on (i.e. is largely influenced by) where you sit" in the governmental system. A fifth proposition of this model is that leaders' power is circumscribed: others often control the information provided, the action channels for decision and the subsequent implementation of decisions. Sixth, Allison argues that once made, a decision is strongly supported no matter how close a call it was. The seventh and eighth propositions are that other countries' representatives can be players in the intra-national political game and that mis-expectations and mis-communications can affect decisions. The final contention is that there are calculated advantages for most players in taking a reticent, safe and conservative line on most key decisions: this means forceful decisions will be more likely to succeed if they are framed as a series of incremental moves.

This chapter will first discuss the key players, including Ministers and senior officials, and attempt to outline how their backgrounds and roles affected their stances. It will then set out to explain how the decision making processes in the New Zealand government work in general and how they worked for the key decisions in this case study; that is, the "action channels" for decision. The case study then examines three decisions where governmental politics was in evidence: the decision to open a diplomatic office, the decision to commit to training the East Timorese armed forces and the decision to end the police deployment. For this last example, the mechanics of the governmental politics are discussed in some detail. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an assessment of the validity of Allison's propositions for Model III for this case study.

## ***The Players***

The 5<sup>th</sup> Labour government was elected in November 1999, and on taking office, was responsible for managing the recently agreed INTERFET deployment to East Timor. Prime Minister Helen Clark was a key player in determining the shape and scope of the

deployment in the study period. It can be assumed that Clark was keen to have this major foreign policy action branded with the mark of her new government. David McGraw has identified Clark personally with “the high tide of liberal internationalism” which he defines as anti-militarism and enthusiasm for the United Nations, human rights and free trade (McGraw 2005). The support for the UN is indeed clear from Clark’s speeches: in her speech from the throne at the opening of parliament in December 1999, Clark did not dwell on foreign policy matters, except to say that UN peacekeeping was her major security priority, with East Timor in particular as the focus (Clark 1999).

Clark also sought to differentiate her new government from its predecessors in terms of style in presenting foreign policy positions, and she used East Timor as an example of this difference. In an interview with her biographer Brian Edwards, Clark said for example,

*I remember [Former National Party Prime Minister Jim] Bolger getting into absolute agony in 1994 when he went up to Bogor in Indonesia for the APEC conference, and we kept hounding him, Was he going to raise Timor? Was he going raise Timor? Well the last thing he wanted to do was raise Timor. Now, my approach has been much more direct than that, and I’ve had some quite tricky international visits. ... there are a small number of issues which we don’t agree on. And yes, I will be raising them...These issues will be raised. And yes, I will tell you, the news media, what I said and what they said in reply (Edwards 2001: p 325).*

Although Helen Clark’s position on East Timor was affected by her personal views and her personal style, the policy positions of her new government also impacted on the governmental politics of decision. In particular, the major reforms of the NZDF undertaken by her government required some ‘hard sell’ from senior levels. The radicalism of the reforms meant that throughout the period 2000–2002 Clark was open to charges of anti-militarism. National’s defence spokesman Max Bradford, for example, said in 2001,

*Yet that is the received wisdom of the Clark Government: to place inordinate faith in the ability of the UN to protect our freedoms, to pull away from our friends into a cocoon of invincibility and invisibility, and to pretend we live in a “benign” strategic environment...*

*At present, I would argue New Zealand is dangerously off track. For all intents and purposes, the US treats us like a third world country on defence and foreign policy issues... In the past two years we have raced apart from Australia, our strongest and longest friend. We can't even share a common view on the strategic environment our two countries face, as was shown during the debate over the huge changes the Clark government has introduced on defence structure. The shocking revelations of a possible army conspiracy to capture defence policy and the bulk of defence funding, set out in the now infamous Gordon document, is a sign of palpable weakness in our national spirit (Bradford 2001).*

New Zealand First Defence Spokesman Ron Mark was equally critical of the decision to disband the combat wing of the RNZAF and reprioritise defence spending:

*This Government seems hell bent on getting rid of the Skyhawks and in generally undermining New Zealand's defensive capabilities. This ... highlights the depth of feeling that New Zealanders have towards their security, which they feel is being deliberately undermined and undervalued (Mark 2001a).*

A successful East Timor deployment, then, provided the perfect political opportunity to support multilateralism, demonstrate in practice the usefulness of reprioritizing defence expenditure on the Army and the supporting functions of the other services such as RNZAF helicopters and Navy transport capacity, and at the same time, allow public opportunities for key leaders to show support for NZDF personnel and their families. In this way, the charge of anti-militarism could be refuted and the government could instead claim that it cared enough about the troops to fund and equip them properly. Helen Clark said in March 2000, for example, when justifying the decision not to buy F-16 fighter aircraft from the USA:

*The deployment to East Timor has shown up critical deficiencies in the army and in our naval and air support capability... This Government is simply not prepared to send New Zealand service people overseas into areas of threat without the assurance of adequate and reliable equipment. Keeping the peace is an increasingly complex and dangerous business. Peacekeeping forces need to be combat ready and properly equipped (Clark 2000e).*

Another key player in the governmental politics of the East Timor engagement was Defence Minister Mark Burton. Burton seemed to bring to the table very similar perspectives to Helen Clark, especially a desire to 'sell' the government's major defence reforms. Indeed, some officials suggested Clark's close involvement in defence policy

issues left Burton with somewhat circumscribed influence within his portfolio (Confidential interviews 5, 1).

The political argument that Labour's defence policy was designed to ensure the safety of service personnel perhaps was designed to address the longstanding grievance held by veterans from the Viet Nam war era that left wing activists, whose numbers included Clark and Goff, had vilified service personnel for their participation in the war. Certainly, Clark, Goff and Defence Minister Mark Burton made a point of showing strong support for service personnel through, for example, visits to Timor, attendance at farewell and homecoming parades and through the high level political support for the family of Private Leonard Manning following his death in action in East Timor in 2000. While the personal styles of Helen Clark and her Defence Minister Mark Burton may not have suggested an immediate cultural affinity with the military (Clark enjoys opera, Burton is a former school teacher and vegan) nevertheless, every opportunity was taken to visit the troops and express the government's support for their work.

As well as party-political reasons to make East Timor a key foreign policy and Defence focus, two other key members of the government, Phil Goff and Matt Robson, had strong personal connections to the East Timor issue. Goff and Robson were both significant players in the 'pulling and hauling', for personal reasons and due to their prominent roles as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for ODA, respectively.

Goff's longstanding interest in East Timor is a matter of record and something he himself refers to frequently in speeches. He has noted the deaths of the Australian Channel Seven media team in Balibo in October 1975 (including New Zealander Garry Cunningham) as a particular spark for his interest (Interview with Hon Phil Goff 13 February 2007). In a speech to the Christchurch branch of NZIIA in 1999, Goff said that, "It was the debate over foreign policy in the 1960s and 70s—Vietnam, South Africa, Chile, East Timor—which played a significant part of my becoming involved in politics and in the Labour Party" (Goff 1999b). Indeed in 1975, Goff had authored a Labour Socialist Youth pamphlet called "East Timor, Aggression, Genocide and a World That Doesn't Care", where he called the Indonesian military leadership "fascist" and said,

*[T]he scale of the atrocities.. amounts to genocide... The actions of the National Government have been a consistent and sorry record of hypocrisy in ignoring basic human rights and failing to condemn Indonesian aggression and suppression of democracy (Goff and New Zealand Labour Party Socialist Youth. 1979).*

He noted that Labour party conferences had carried, by overwhelming majorities, motions condemning Indonesian actions. He stated,

*New Zealand needs, and must, demand a Government which has the courage to stand up for human rights and not to sacrifice principles for expediency. New Zealand Labour Socialist Youth must ensure that future Labour Governments stay true to the proud record and tradition of democratic socialists in international affairs, and offer no compromise to defending human rights which we hold to be fundamental (Goff and New Zealand Labour Party Socialist Youth. 1979).*

Goff's strong views did not, in the event, determine the shape of the East Timor policy of the fourth Labour government from 1984–1990, in which he was a Minister. Labour's Foreign Minister Russell Marshall, like his National party successor Don McKinnon, favoured "quiet diplomacy" to express New Zealand's concerns (Hoadley 2005). Goff himself recalls that while Labour party conferences and activists were receptive to discussion, the parliamentary wing of the party was more cautious. This was mainly because there were other larger foreign policy debates in play and the East Timor issue "had no profile" in the mid 1980s, due to the dwindling number of Fretilin forces, the paucity of news from the territory and its closure to nearly all foreigners, although Goff recalls that he lobbied the junior Foreign Affairs Minister Frank O'Flynn on the subject, although not especially vigorously (Interview with Hon Phil Goff 13 February 2007).

Perhaps seeking to deflect attention from this historical stance, when Goff came to shadow foreign affairs portfolio in mid 1999 he suggested that advice from officials advocating "quiet diplomacy" had in fact been the key determinant of successive governments' policy on the issue. In an article for the NZ International Review, Goff refers to the "several hundreds of pages of Foreign Affairs documents" that he has read, which reflect "remarkably consistent advice" that any New Zealand concern for East Timorese plight would be "subordinated to the desire to maintain good relations with Indonesia". He asked whether Indonesia's economic and political importance meant



New Zealand had to mute its criticism of what it knew was wrong and answered, “Foreign Affairs thought so, and to a great extent successive governments followed its advice.” He then concluded that “[the New Zealand] position was a selfish one. We did too little and showed too little courage. We will not look back on our stance on East Timor with the pride we feel for other times in our history when we adopted a more courageous and principled stance” (Goff 1999a). While this stance may have been simply political positioning—after all, mid 1999 was only a few months out from an election, and a time when some kind of political settlement for East Timor finally seemed possible—the implicit shifting of blame from governments to officials may also affected Goff’s subsequent relationships with his MFAT officials, on East Timor and other issues.

Goff had been active in a parliamentary pressure group on East Timor, first visiting in 1994 in the delegation led by Roger McLay and comprising himself, Jim Sutton, Nick Smith and Tau Henare. This group put increased pressure on the then National Government and in particular Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Don McKinnon. Goff believes this pressure was responsible for the quiet dropping from official papers and speeches of the description of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor as “irreversible”. Goff also participated in a parliamentary delegation to East Timor in August 1999, to observe the UNAMET ballot. He describes this visit, with the team centred in Ainaro in central East Timor, as “fraught and emotional”, and with hindsight, somewhat dangerous, given that documents were later discovered which showed the militias had intended to kill all foreigners in the Ainaro area (Interview with Hon Phil Goff 13 February 2007).

Like Goff, Alliance Minister Matt Robson had also had a long interest in East Timor self determination and human rights. As a young Labour party activist in the mid 1970s, Robson recalls a high level of interest following the Indonesian invasion in December 1975. This came hard on the heels of left wing opposition to the Viet Nam war in the early 1970s—for the Labour party, Auckland University was a key locus for protest activity. Robson recalls working alongside Helen Clark, Michael Bassett and Phil Goff organising anti war protests on campus. Robson had fallen out with the Labour party during the ‘Rogernomics’ period of the 1980s and in due course left to join Jim Anderton’s New Labour party. Throughout this period, Robson says he continued to

believe in the right of East Timor for self determination—he believed key Labour figures in the 1980s, such as Helen Clark who was chair of the Foreign Affairs and Defence select committee “went sour on East Timor” and decided to move to a more centrist position on the issue, perhaps because they considered achieving the nuclear free policy was a more important foreign policy focus. Robson recalls Clark’s visit to Indonesia, wherein she effectively suggested it was time for activists to “move on” from the East Timor issue. Robson recalls that then Prime Minister David Lange was not interested in East Timor and indeed complained that the Indonesians were insufficiently grateful to New Zealand for our efforts to keep East Timor off the international agenda (Interview with Matt Robson, 7 February 2007).

Robson entered parliament as an Alliance MP in 1996 and was involved in the parliamentary visit to East Timor in 1999. Robson had also stayed in touch with the issue through NGO networks, was in regular touch with the CNRT including Xanana Gusmao and Kirsty Sword in Jakarta. Like Goff, Robson also suggested in public statements that official advice on East Timor suggested prioritising relations with Indonesia, and regional stability, over the concerns of the East Timorese. Robson did not tie his criticism directly to MFAT officials, but suggested that such advice had been the consensus view of most “strategic analysts” and that the New Zealand government accepted that advice, which was, Robson argued “to its shame” (Robson 2001c). It is interesting that Robson, as a Minister from a minority party, criticised the whole regional security basis for foreign policy decisions and in doing so, was happy to characterise his position as outside the mainstream of academic and official thinking. Goff, on the other hand notes that “constant denunciation of Indonesia would have served little purpose” but argues that officials did not find the right balance between avoiding this while refusing to compromise on the principle of self determination for the Timorese (Goff 1999a). While Robson’s stance was less specifically critical of MFAT, his comments suggested that he did not think it necessary to have broad support for foreign policy decisions either from officialdom or the academic community.

Robson himself recalls some general antagonism with MFAT officials over the ODA review. He said that in general “officials may have been frustrated with me but they were always professional” but that over the ODA Review, Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Neil Walter did not hide his strong opposition to the Government's policy—"at one meeting he was so angry I thought he wanted to kill me!" Nevertheless, Robson suggests that there were seldom battles over East Timor policy during his time in Cabinet, as there was widespread agreement that comprehensive engagement was the right thing to do—"It was good PR and also a real chance to do something good" (Interview with Hon Matt Robson February 2007).

Ministers' portfolios also influenced their stances. While Phil Goff was Minister of Trade as well as Foreign Affairs, he nevertheless saw the humanitarian elements of the East Timor policy, along with support for the UN, for regional security and human rights as more important in this case than trade. Goff, for example, in late 2003, was prepared to call for an international tribunal on crimes against humanity in East Timor, whereas other foreign Ministers were more hesitant to do so, mainly for fear of upsetting Indonesia, an important trading partner. Goff was also troubled, according to one official, by some in the East Timorese leadership's reluctance to push for justice for the 1999 crimes against humanity. Matt Robson, in addition to his personal history of activism, had a bureaucratic agenda to promote ODA as a key solution to regional insecurity, in his role as Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for ODA. Robson wanted to show that New Zealand aid was high quality, well targeted and a better use of resources than other options such as military. He also wanted to show the benefit of reformed ODA delivery following the controversial 2000 ODA review.

Compared to Phil Goff and Matt Robson, Helen Clark took a more moderate stance on East Timor, which can be ascribed to her role as Prime Minister where she had to balance domestic concerns with foreign policy priorities. She was, according to one official "more measured than Mr Goff" (Confidential Interview 7).

Other Cabinet Ministers who took stances on East Timor were Police Minister George Hawkins and Customs Minister Rick Barker. Neither was on the record as a strong advocate on East Timor issues (unlike Goff or Robson) and both were balancing the Government's desire for a strong multi-agency intervention in East Timor with funding and staffing pressures within their own, domestically-focused portfolios. This had particular impact for the police deployment as we will discuss later in this chapter.

Placements on the Cabinet ranking list may have been a factor too, with both Hawkins and Barker considerably lower ranked than Goff. As Matt Robson recalled “the powerful ministers were on side (on East Timor) so whatever George Hawkins thought didn’t really matter” (Interview with Hon Matt Robson February 2007).

There was some sense within the Cabinet that the economically ‘dry’ Ministers such as Michael Cullen and Jim Sutton, while supportive of the East Timor policy in principle, were keen to see more comprehensive justifications for expenditure, but not to the extent that they ever opposed a recommendation to Cabinet on an individual deployment. While Jim Sutton had been on the Parliamentary delegation to East Timor in 1994 and had lobbied former foreign Minister Don McKinnon on the issue in 1998, he, along with Cullen, was reported to be less influenced by humanitarianism in his foreign policy views—for example he had some scepticism about the value of development assistance and did not see the need for development and trade policy to be more integrated (Interview with Hon Matt Robson February 2007).

Despite these variations in positions, overall, those interviewed for this study suggested a high level of unanimity amongst the Cabinet players, despite their different roles and their differing levels of historical interest in the East Timor issue. As we will see when we come to examine the governmental politics model as a useful explanatory framework for this case study, it becomes rather hard to identify specific cases of governmental dispute on East Timor decisions and specific instances of pulling and hauling. Even when such examples are found, it is hard to separate out variables such as role and personal views.

The personal and organisational agendas of senior foreign affairs and defence officials are also important to a bureaucratic politics analysis. In the case of the MFAT officials, issues were seen through the lens of personal experience and against the backdrop of significant organisational change in the form of the ODA Review. The accusations from Goff and Robson that official advice on East Timor had been misguided, even shameful, can not have been easy to accept for senior officials who had worked closely on preparation of that advice. Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade until 1999, Richard Nottage, had been Ambassador to Indonesia from 1980–1982, and his

successor Neil Walter had been Ambassador in Jakarta from 1990–1994. The Deputy Secretary in charge of political and security issues, including for South East Asia in this period was Chris Elder who went on, in 2001, to be Ambassador in Jakarta. His successor as Deputy Secretary, Mike Green, came back from that same Ambassadorial post.

Senior MFAT officials were also widely believed to be strongly opposed to the results of the ODA Review, which criticized MFAT's management of aid delivery, advocated radical and expensive organizational change, and suggested that using ODA as a tool of foreign policy would be no longer appropriate. This review was personally championed by Matt Robson and the Alliance party, although a key staffer in Phil Goff's office, David Shearer, was also closely involved. While it is clear that the ODA review was on officials' minds, and the relationship with Matt Robson was strained because of it, it is not clear how this specifically affected decisions on East Timor. In some cases, officials may have tempered their natural opposition to Ministerial activism on East Timor in order to 'keep the powder dry' for other larger contests over ODA delivery, while on the other hand, dismay over the ODA Review could have led to all Ministerial viewpoints being considered extreme and unreasonable. Allison's model III tells us that these concurrent organisational and 'role' issues will be important, but it does not provide guidance on what this means in practice for particular decisions.

For defence officials, the personality issues were more immediate, in the form of allegations of an inappropriate campaign by senior Army officers to win influence and funding at the expense of the other services. Aspects of this alleged campaign were set out in a memo by Colonel Ian Gordon, later leaked. This memo suggested this campaign was coordinated and organizationally supported, but other documents, supposedly corroborating this, were apparently shredded by senior Army officials. There was also an allegation of a campaign of leaks by two different factions in the Army. Three official investigations in to these matters were carried out in the second half of 2001 with the result of the forced resignation of head of the Army, Chief of General Staff Maurice Dodson and public criticism of the Army's approach by Chief of Defence Force, Air Marshall Carey Adamson. Adamson said that distrust between the Army, Navy and Air Force was the worst he had ever seen in his career (TVNZ 2001). Personality conflicts, allegations of inappropriate use of government funding for PR campaigns and allegations

of leak campaigns such as this impacted negatively on the perception of professionalism within the senior levels of NZDF, and were picked up by Opposition politicians to criticise the Government. For example, New Zealand First Defence Spokesman Ron Mark alleged, “There have been strong rumours and accusations that the Army has used taxpayers’ money to conduct a public relations campaign in support of its politicisation plan”. Referring to what he called “a dishonourable and illegal order” to destroy documents relating to this PR campaign, Mark contended that “the Army is facing a breakdown in discipline and a collapse in morale” (Mark 2001b). By late 2001 both the NZDF and the Government wanted to limit this negative exposure—Air Marshall Bruce Ferguson was installed as CDF in early 2002 and both the government and NZDF made it clear in media statements that a new chapter would be opened and personality and ‘role’ conflicts would be downplayed. Safety and reticence would be the order of the day.

The issues affecting NZDF at this time can be interpreted as an example of Miles’ Law in action: General Dodson was perceived as a supporter of the Government’s Defence policy, especially the reprioritising of funding towards the Army and away from combat capabilities in the Navy and Air Force (frigates and strike aircraft). Air Marshall Adamson, with an Air Force background, may have found the Government’s policies rather more confronting. Opposition politicians were keen to ‘expose’ underhand dealings by the Army as a way of discrediting the overall thrust of the new Defence policy. Yet while Miles’ Law may have applied at the broader level, again, the impact on specific decisions on East Timor is hard to gauge. While an extended and successful commitment to East Timor may have suited those who wanted to ‘prove’ that the government should focus on a better equipped Army as opposed to combat aircraft—Piers Reid, for example, makes this case (Reid 2000)—the extension of the deployment ironically impacted hardest on the Army, where introduction of new Light Armoured Vehicles and Light Operational Vehicles was delayed due to the high numbers of personnel involved in the Timor deployment.

The New Zealand Police was also affected by personality issues, this time related to Police Commissioner Peter Doone’s departure in January 2000 after allegations that he inappropriately interfered when an officer questioned his partner over drink driving in late November 1999 (Bingham and Small 2000). Given it was confined to one person

only, the ensuing scandal did not have the broader policy resonances as that affecting Defence, but personal scandals cannot but have impact, as a strong and experienced Police Commissioner would have more weight in the ‘pulling and hauling’ game. Like incoming Chief of Defence Force Bruce Ferguson, new Police Commissioner Rob Robinson may have had a brief to avoid controversy; this would have circumscribed his influence to a degree. Nevertheless, Commissioner Robinson’s personal views on the value of the police deployment were important, as is covered later in this chapter.

The personal support of the Comptroller of Customs, Robin Dare, for the East Timor deployment was also cited as a significant driver for that deployment, according to official interviews (Confidential interviews 1,7,8). On the other hand, the support of the CEO of the Department for Corrections was not considered nearly so influential in driving the prison officers’ deployment, whereas the fact that Matt Robson was also the Minister of Corrections was seen as of particular importance by all those interviewed for this thesis. Indeed Robson himself says “Corrections wanted to please me” (Interview with Hon Matt Robson, 7 February 2007).

## ***The Structure of the Game***

The chief action channel for making decisions about complex, multi-agency matters in New Zealand Government is the preparation of Cabinet papers. These papers may be called for by a Minister or a small group of Ministers, or they may be recommended by officials. Each paper must have a sponsoring Minister or Ministers, who speak to the paper in the Cabinet meeting. Cabinet papers have a maximum length, a strict formatting template and must have clear recommendations. Evidence of inter-agency consultation is required: there is a template to this end, which must be filled in and submitted to the Cabinet office, along with the paper. There are strict lead times for submission of Cabinet papers, to allow the Cabinet office to check them and copy them for Ministers to read in good time before the meeting. Papers are usually submitted first to a Cabinet Committee—e.g. the Policy Committee (POL) or the External Relations and Defence Committee (ERD). These meet weekly and every second week respectively. Officials do not generally attend these meetings but are often asked to wait outside, to be called in if they are needed. Once approved by the Cabinet Committee, the Cabinet paper is then put

to the full Cabinet for endorsement, and a Cabinet minute is produced and distributed (on green paper—called a “green” within the system). This minute records decisions, repeating generally the exact the wording of the recommendations.

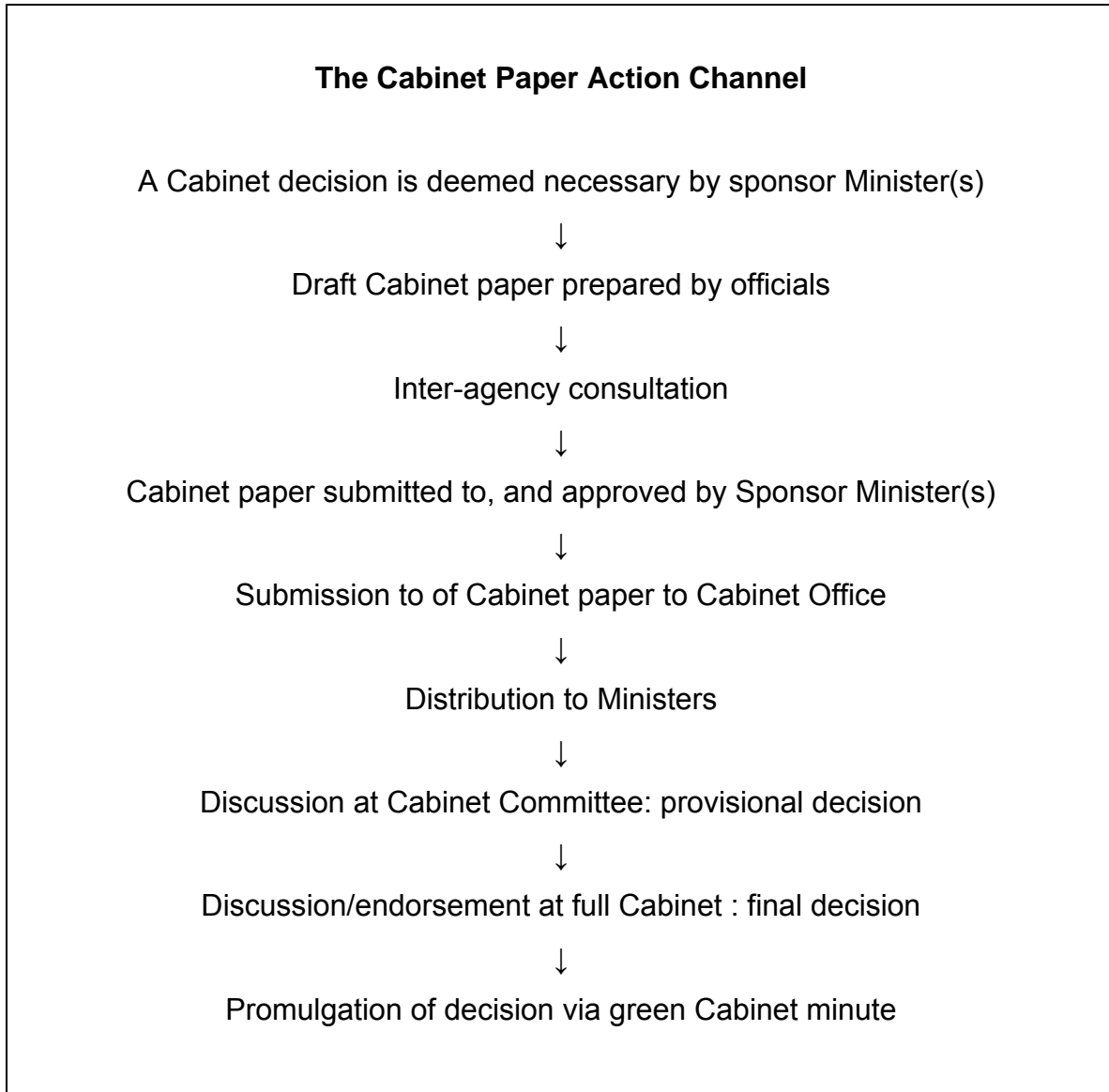


Figure 4.1: the Cabinet Paper Process

The salient features of this action channel for decision are that it is it fairly formalised and inflexible in terms of process, paper length, and timeframes, it requires longish lead times and it requires a high level of agreement between Government departments, between officials and their Ministers and between the different Ministers around the



Cabinet table. Compared to a presidential system, the Cabinet system requires consensus, therefore decisions are slower and potentially less controversial.<sup>38</sup>

Some key Government decisions do not need to go through the Cabinet paper action channel however, and it does not seem immediately apparent how the distinction is made. While traditionally, all Defence deployment decisions are made by Cabinet (even though this power is delegated to the Minister of Defence under the Defence Act 1990), decisions about deployments of other uniformed personnel were not always made by the whole Cabinet. ODA decisions, for example, are delegated to the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for ODA. Given that NZODA funded much of the Corrections, Courts and Customs deployments, these deployments were not put to Cabinet for decision. The Police deployments were approved by Cabinet, but in the case of the last deployment, which was more controversial, the Police Minister sought to take the decision unilaterally—this is covered in more detail later in this chapter.

It is obvious why officials prefer not to use the Cabinet paper process: it requires lengthy consultation and advance submission of papers. A quick submission to one, two or even three Ministers is a good deal faster than a Cabinet paper which must in any case be submitted to the Minister(s) first, then approved by both a Cabinet Committee and Cabinet as a whole.

As well as the processes for formal decisions, there are also bureaucratic processes for discussion of the substantive matters at hand, before recommendations are put to Ministers. Throughout the period of study 2000–2002, these processes for inter-agency coordination within the government themselves became more formalized. The Officials Domestic and External Security Committee (ODESC) which is attended by departmental heads or their nominees (e.g. a Deputy Secretary) began to receive and discuss a wide range of Cabinet papers, or issues which might be later considered in draft Cabinet papers in a more systematised way. (Earlier ODESC had had a more narrow intelligence focus). At working level, inter-departmental groups on key policy and

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<sup>38</sup> If the decision involves Treaty action, then it must not only go through the Cabinet paper process, but a National Interest Analysis must be produced, which is then examined by the relevant parliamentary Select Committee, making an even more lengthy process.

security issues were convened more frequently—e.g. for Solomon Islands, maritime surveillance.<sup>39</sup>

In the period of study, however, formalised inter-agency processes were in their infancy. MFAT appointed a Special Adviser on East Timor—Julie MacKenzie, who along with the East Timor desk officer, conducted MFAT’s negotiations with other agencies and liaison with Ministers’ offices as required. Towards the end of the study period a regular meeting between the MFAT Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade or relevant Deputy Secretary, the Secretary of Defence and Chief of Defence Force was instituted to discuss East Timor issues. The Development Programme Manager in MFAT’s Development Cooperation Division kept in regular touch with key operational people in the Department of Corrections, Department for Courts, Customs and Police, as NZODA was funding all or part of each of these deployments. There were not, however, any formal interdepartmental meetings on the East Timor deployment. The key “action channel” for major deployment decisions remained the process around the drafting and approval of Cabinet papers. While the 2000 *Future Involvement: Strategy Framework* paper provided an umbrella framework for subsequent papers on military and police deployments, visits and ODA strategies, much of the real decision on these matters was contested in the drafting process for the individual Cabinet papers for each deployment.

## ***Government decisions explained using a governmental politics model***

The basis of a governmental politics analysis in the first instance is the presumption that overall government decision is not part of a coherent strategy in response to a broader problem but is rather a collage of smaller decisions, each one made as a result of pulling and hauling of politics at the time, shaped by the action channels used and the deadlines and other process issues involved. In this analysis, individuals, and their views and agendas matter more than overall strategy.

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<sup>39</sup> For the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, which began in mid 2003, the interagency processes were considerably more advanced, and, moreover New Zealand representatives also participated in the Australian officials’ Inter-Departmental Group, held weekly in Canberra.

Evidence to support a model III analysis lies in the examination of the practical business of decision making. While the Cabinet did approve an overall strategy for New Zealand engagement—the 2000 Strategy Framework paper—most deployment decisions were made on an agency-by-agency basis, and usually commitments made for six to twelve months only. Moreover, at no single point did the government ‘decide’ the division of resources between each agency. Neither was there any coherent view at the outset about the length of the deployment—that is, no-one specified that the Corrections, Customs and Police engagement would last until the end of 2001, followed by a drawdown of the NZDF battalion at the end of 2002, followed by a smaller NZDF contribution to the peacekeeping force, training the East Timor Defence Force and an ongoing diplomatic presence and ODA programme.

**Table 4.1**  
**Cabinet papers on East Timor deployments 2000–2002<sup>40</sup>**

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Period covered</b>
CAB (99) 711	8 November 1999	East Timor: Deployment of NZ Police Staff : Insurance	November 1999–May 2000
CBC(99) 7	16 December 1999	New Zealand Defence Force Contribution to United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor	February 2000–31 March 2001
POL(00) 29	5 May 2000	United Nations : East Timor : Deployment of New Zealand Police	May 2000–November 2000
ERD (30)	9 August 2000	East Timor: Future New Zealand Involvement (the opening of MFAT office in Dili, NZODA programme)	August 2000–post independence
ERD (00) 31	9 August 2000	East Timor : NZDF Contribution to the United Nations Transitional Administration East Timor	November 2000–May 2001

<sup>40</sup> This table lists the Cabinet papers held on MFAT East Timor archives and includes all papers touching on substantive policy matters. There may be other Cabinet papers of more general nature which included East Timor issues which are not listed here—for example, papers detailing legal arrangements with the UN such as Status of Forces, Letters of Assist (LOA) and use of contingent-owned equipment.

		(UNTAET)	
ERD (00) 40	23 August 2000	East Timor : Future New Zealand Involvement ( as above in ERD (00) 30 but including revised Strategy Framework)	August 2000–post independence
ERD (00) 52 :		East Timor: Deployment of New Zealand Police (5 <sup>th</sup> Contingent)	November 2000–May 2001
ERD (00) 67	6 December 2000	East Timor: NZDF Contribution to UNTAET	31 May 2001–31 May 2002
ERD (01) 9	2 May 2001	New Zealand Police Presence in East Timor	June 2001–December 2001
CAB (01) 187	4 May 2001	NZDF Contribution to UNTAET	June 2002–December 2002
POL(01) 89	8 May 2001	East Timor; NZDF Contribution to UNTAET	June 2002–December 2002
ERD (01) 52	5 December 2001	East Timor: NZDF Contribution to UNTAET Successor Mission	May 2002–November 2002, with reference to further smaller contribution from November 2002, with details yet to be decided
ERD (02) 1	20 February 2002	Provision of Helicopter Support to the United Nations in East Timor : Letter of Assist	1 March 2002–28 February 2003
ERD(02) 11	24 April 2002	East Timor: New Zealand Defence Force Contribution Post November 2002	PKF and, SATT team to June 2003

Just as Table 4.1 shows how many decisions were made in an incremental (six or twelve month) fashion, it also shows that the decision-making body varied. NZDF and Police deployments were approved by Cabinet papers, as was the MFAT Future Involvement: Strategy Framework paper. Defence deployments are traditionally

approved by Cabinet<sup>41</sup> but the usual process is not so clear for Police deployments. This latter question was raised in mid 2001 when the Police Minister sought to make a decision to withdraw the contingent unilaterally. Some decisions by Cabinet cover relatively small amounts of resources and sometimes do not even involve expenditure of new money, for example, the 1999 decision about insurance for the New Zealand Police contingent approved \$12,000 from within existing funds in Vote Police.

On the other hand, other decisions involving significant amounts of New Zealand Government resources and/or deployment of uniformed personnel did not appear to require a Cabinet decision. Although the overall shape of the ODA programme was included for endorsement in the Cabinet paper “East Timor: Future New Zealand Involvement” in August 2000, along with a variety of other issues, in general ODA allocations were approved under delegation by the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for ODA. This included decisions about the share of the ODA budget allocated to East Timor as well as activities that comprised the programme. Deployments of Corrections, Customs and Courts personnel were approved by their respective Ministers in conjunction with the Minister Foreign Affairs and Trade and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Although the decision to open the Representative Office in Dili in 2000 was endorsed by Cabinet in August 2000, subsequent decisions about it were made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in consultation with the Prime Minister. The action channels for decision, therefore, reflect legal, historical, bureaucratic and political factors, as we will see in the examples later in this chapter, rather than any established, regular framework for decision.

The case study for this thesis comprises a large number of decisions: the Cabinet papers in Table 4.1 are only some of the decisions made from early 2000 to late 2002.

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<sup>41</sup> Section 5 of the Defence Act 1990 empowers the Governor General (the Commander in Chief) to raise and maintain armed forces for among other things protection of interests of New Zealand within New Zealand or elsewhere and contribution of forces to any collective security or UN treaties or arrangements. While the Defence Act does not contain procedural steps required to deploy soldiers, the Constitutional convention is that Cabinet acts on the Governor General’s behalf. There is no requirement for the Governor General to sign off on any deployment. On smaller operations, such as single person UN Peacekeeping missions, Ministers with ‘powers to act’ on behalf of the Prime Minister and Cabinet authorise deployments. Generally speaking Rules of Engagement are authorised personally by the Prime Minister. This is an emerging convention and often has more to do with the interest in such things taken by the Prime Minister than a set process.

Given this, this chapter presents three decisions as examples of governmental politics in action: the opening of the Dili office, the decision to assist with training of the East Timor Defence Force and the decision to deploy various police contingents. In the latter example, we have focused in particular on the decision to continue the police deployment from May 2001 to December 2001 as a particular example of governmental politics in action. In making this selection, it is tempting to choose examples that illustrate Allison's model—a point to which we shall return at the end of this chapter. For the most part, however, this chapter will look in depth at three decisions which are not covered elsewhere<sup>42</sup>. By choosing examples that were not covered elsewhere, the aim is to add to a more rounded view of the case study as a whole, even if this means some sacrifice in the comparative elements of the three models.

The opening of the Dili office represented a significant change in government policy in the first half of 2000. At first, it was agreed not to have a diplomatic mission on the ground in Dili but by mid 2000, the plans to open to office were underway. A governmental politics explanation for this decision focuses on the views of key players and the process for decision.

Senior MFAT officials at first did not want a permanent office in Dili. Officials made a sensible case for this, arguing that once opened, an office would be hard to close without upsetting the host country. They also marshalled arguments based on national interests: East Timor was far from New Zealand, there was no strong history of people to people connection compared to, say, Polynesian countries with large numbers of immigrants in New Zealand, and there was no prospect of a substantial trade and economic relationship. Officials argued that once the UN left, the relationship between New Zealand and East Timor in the long term would be friendly but “not among either countries' closest” (MFAT Archives 2000a).

Officials were also acutely aware of the ongoing cost of having a permanent office. Any new Embassy must be eventually slotted into the existing MFAT network of posts: this means standardized operational planning, permanent or semi-permanent

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<sup>42</sup> The UN military deployments are covered in the chapter on the Rational Actor Model and the ODA decisions are covered the chapter on Organisational Behaviour, for example.

accommodation for the office and for staff housing, security, communication, IT systems, and the usual posting terms and conditions for staff. These SOPs are not designed for temporary situations, but rather for sustainable relationships with host countries and long term careers for staff. They are not cheap. Experience had taught MFAT that a normal Embassy needs a minimum of two, if not three seconded (New Zealand) staff in order to meet all these SOPs. It also needs permanent provision in the baseline budget. If Ministers were not prepared to increase MFAT's baseline budget significantly to cover the ongoing cost, then some senior officials believed there should be no new office opened at all, as they did not believe that the East Timor relationship was sufficiently important to justify cutting any other ongoing activity or post.

There were personality issues at stake as well. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Neil Walter, a former Ambassador to Indonesia, was, according to one source, "conservative in his view on this; he didn't want an Embassy" (Confidential Interview 7). One source claimed he was genuinely concerned that MFAT resources were being overstretched with its staff bearing the brunt of this and he was worried that Ministers were not taking responsibility for ever increasing demands on a finite human resource (Confidential interview 7). Another source suggested Neil Walter had "a realistic view of the long term relationship, but this view conflicted with the views held by Ministers" (Confidential interview 1). It is also possible that he was unsure of Ministers' motives and was wary after the attacks on his and others' previous official advice on East Timor during the Indonesian occupation period. He may have taken personally Ministerial activism on the ODA review. Other senior officials were apparently less firm in their views than Walter. One source claimed other senior MFAT staff were "frustrated with *both* the Ministers and the Secretary" (Confidential interview 7).

On the other hand, key Ministers Phil Goff and Matt Robson soon wanted diplomatic presence in Dili. This stance reflected their shared belief that New Zealand's relationship with East Timor was about more than just a contribution to a UN mission. In 2001, Robson is recorded as saying "East Timor is special" and "we all have to stay committed for a long time". Goff, for his part, said, "East Timor might not be a political or economic priority for New Zealand but it was a moral one" (MFAT Archives 2001b). Their view of a broader relationship reflected personal connections to East Timor leaders

such as Jose Ramos-Horta and Xanana Gusmao, and their sense that humanitarian concerns and close proximity made East Timor an important long term foreign policy priority. Goff and Robson both believed that New Zealand “owed” East Timor for earlier passivity about human rights abuses. That Ministers favoured a permanent office was clear to officials. Neil Walter was, according to one, “putting off the inevitable” (Confidential Interview 7).

The opening of the office in Dili proved an example of bureaucratic politics in action. The MFAT advice in early 2000 was that the relationship might be managed by more visits to the territory from Jakarta and Wellington. Goff initially concurred. In practice, this proved unwieldy. Julie MacKenzie and Jakarta officials made frequent visits but keeping tabs on all the different elements of the New Zealand contribution was becoming harder to manage. Finding adequate resources to properly cover East Timor as well as ongoing Indonesian concerns also became a challenge for the Jakarta Embassy and there were issues about the status of the New Zealand Embassy with respect to the UN Transitional Administration that were never clarified —i.e. no one was clear if the Embassy in Jakarta was officially accredited to UNTAET (Confidential interview 6). In mid-2000, it was recommended that an office be opened. Officials’ hesitancy is evident in the papers. It was stressed at every point that this would be “small and temporary” office, not a permanent diplomatic mission (MFAT Archives 2000a). This was made very clear in the letter of guidance to new Representative Jonathan Austin (MFAT Archives). This was reflected in the staffing of one officer only, at mid level and the accommodation of one leased house, in bad need of repair, which would serve as both the office and home of the New Zealand Representative and would double up as the NZDF in-theatre leave centre and kiwi ‘bar’ in Dili. In practice this situation become untenable as noisy soldiers partied on their leave break, away from the hard work of patrolling the mountainous regions of Cova Lima District. They were often joined in their partying by Customs and Corrections officers from in and around Dili. The situation was hardly conducive to operating an ongoing diplomatic mission (Confidential interview 1).

Although the prevailing bureaucratic view was that MFAT should spend as little money as possible on the Dili office, MFAT incrementally agreed to small measures to improve the situation. The NZDF leave centre was moved to Port Hera, some basic



repairs were done to the house (although it still leaked badly in the rain) an official car was purchased, and three local staff—a driver, a cleaner and a guard—were hired. One MFAT source said that getting necessary items such as a vehicle was difficult. The edict was “spend no money” (Confidential interview 1).

In late 2001 a decision was required about whether to keep the office open after East Timor’s independence. Sources interviewed for this study suggested that senior MFAT officials wanted to close it at that point. One official said that while this was the MFAT preference “it was not politically realistic to shut it—there was no way that Ministers would allow for us not to have representation in Dili” (Confidential interview 7). MFAT officials decided that the best way to navigate through the different views on the relative importance of the long term bilateral relationship (and thus the justification for a permanent mission) was to ask the Prime Minister to decide, as she was “more moderate than Mr Goff” (Confidential Interview 7). A submission was therefore sent to her with options on 7 November 2001. Submissions to the Prime Minister are required to go through the appropriate portfolio Minister, however, so it would be necessary to get Phil Goff to agree to ask the PM to decide. The submission argued that “while East Timor is not of major strategic importance to New Zealand, the current reality is a close political relationship and a highly valued ODA programme”. It also argued that “no additional funding was ever approved for what was to be a temporary liaison office” but that the office only cost NZ\$105,000 per year to operate over and above what it would cost to manage the relationship from Jakarta. It also argued that a one-off payment of \$150,000 was needed to construct a separate office on the site of Kiwi House. The submission recommended the construction proceed and the temporary office be kept open for a further two years from July 2002, with its future to be reviewed in late 2003. In her written comments on the submission, Prime Minister Helen Clark favoured retaining the office for a further eighteen months to two years, with a review in 2003. Several reasons were offered, including the continuing presence of NZ military until November 2002 and the good relationship between New Zealand and East Timor (MFAT Archives 2001t).

With the decision for the office to remain, MFAT officials then had to make recommendations about its diplomatic status. Most diplomatic missions were converting from Representative Offices to Embassies upon independence. However MFAT officials

believed full Embassy status would make the office harder to close politically. In March 2002, therefore, a submission was put to Mr Goff to recommend that the office be named a Consulate General instead of an Embassy. The logic here was that designating the office an Embassy “would create long-term expectations which might be awkward if the 2003 review were to decide against representation on the ground in East Timor” (MFAT Archives 2002c). A more frank assessment from a senior MFAT official 18 months afterwards was that “the idea was that a Consulate could be stealthily closed in a couple of years but that delightful prospect seems to be receding despite the demise of Matt Robson”<sup>43</sup> (MFAT Archives 2003).

Ministers themselves also had political reasons to support a temporary office, as did the Prime Minister, as evidenced in her comments above. As well as strategic advantages vis a vis the Timorese, a temporary office precluded a potentially public disagreement with senior officials in the short term and avoided the need for a large budget to upgrade to an Embassy. Ministers, who wanted to be engaged with East Timor for the long term, may have believed that in due course, the enduring power of organisational routines and the weight of precedent would ensure the office stayed open. In the event, this is what transpired.

Of course, fast moving events on the ground also made a temporary office justifiable. The original Cabinet paper in August 2000 argued it was “difficult to predict the nature of New Zealand intervention further into the future because of current uncertainties in East Timor”. One official source also suggested this was Minister Goff’s initial thought as well—at least in early 2000—“he was equivocal about the permanent office and open to the idea that it could be done on a small, limited and temporary basis. But his view changed over the first half of 2000” (Confidential interview 6). Goff himself said that he saw it at first as a temporary office but at the same time, was aware it would be hard to close, and aware that operationally a one person office was hard on the incumbent. He noted that the government weighed up the value of a permanent Dili Embassy against proposed new Embassies in Brazil, Poland, and Egypt, all of which

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<sup>43</sup> The Alliance party had lost support significantly in the 2002 election. Following this election, although still in Parliament, Matt Robson was no longer in Cabinet and no longer Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs.

would consolidate important trade relationships. Nevertheless Goff noted a “degree of sentiment” with regard to East Timor: it was poor, it was in the neighbourhood and New Zealand had had a major involvement there in the transitional period. There was also, he said, “a sense of obligation” (Interview with Hon Phil Goff 13 February 2007).

It can be argued that the opening of the office shows several elements of bureaucratic politics in action, in particular, the way strong views of key personalities (Ministers) could carry the day against official advice, and the way decisions were cut into smaller pieces and cast as temporary measures in order to allow all concerned to postpone the larger contentious strategic issue. This argument is supported by the recollections of many of the people involved at the time. Nevertheless rational arguments for the way the issue was handled (i.e. a temporary office was recommended and agreed unanimously because of uncertainty in the strategic situation) can also be found, and these were indeed articulated at the time.

Another example of bureaucratic politics comes from the agreement to provide NZDF personnel to train the new East Timorese military force. This force was deemed necessary by the East Timorese leaders in 2000, as a way of absorbing former Falintil combatants. Many in donor countries felt the plan was flawed as there was no clear role for the new force: it had been decided, for example, that it was too controversial to put former guerrillas on the border with Indonesia so that role was given to the Border Police. The former guerrillas were also older, many were chronically ill after years in the jungle and they were expected to have difficulty adjusting to the routine and indeed tedium of life in barracks as a formed standing army. Politically, the new military force was also controversial. Many of the guerrillas felt personal allegiance to CNRT leader and later President Xanana Gusmao, and were less affiliated with the lusophone diaspora leaders that dominated the Fretilin party which came to power. Several commentators saw the Fretilin party’s desire to build up the police force and arm part of it with military style weapons as a deliberate counterbalance to the military. Within the military too, tensions quickly arose. A second battalion was recruited with younger, better educated soldiers and officers, mostly from the Western provinces. This was, according to one diplomatic report, “to balance the Eastern bias amongst the former Falintil”. It was noted that “the

general view is that the sooner these fresh recruits can replace some of the old ex-Falintil lags, the better” (MFAT Archives 2002a).

The newly formed East Timor Defence Force—later renamed Falintil Força Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) was outside the UN’s peacekeeping force and indeed outside the UNTAET mandate, although UNTAET kept oversight of progress, as the effective transitional government of the territory. Bilateral donors were called upon to fund it. Australia and Portugal showed interest, and New Zealand was asked to join.

In late September 2000, Ministry of Defence officials made a submission to the Minister of Defence recommending that New Zealand be involved, mainly because this was desired by Australia (MFAT Archives 2000d). Australia accepted the ETDF as inevitable, and wanted it to develop quickly and professionally, so that it could take over responsibility for the territory’s security in due course from the UN PKF. Defence officials however stopped short of recommending New Zealand participate fully, asking their Minister instead only to agree to send two people on a scoping study to Dili (along with Australian representatives) and to defer formal endorsement from Cabinet until they had more information on longer term plans (MFAT Archives 2000l). In October 2000, the formal New Zealand position was conveyed via diplomatic cable as follows:

*We recognise there is a need to develop an indigenous East Timor Defence Force. The East Timor Transitional Government has endorsed the King’s College Study proposal to establish a 3,000-strong defence force (1,500 professionals and 1,500 reservists) mostly infantry, and centred on ex-Falintil personnel. New Zealand is willing, in principle, to provide modest training support to help develop an East Timor Defence Force that is effective, subordinate to civilian government control and proportionate to East Timor’s resources. Such support will be subject to UN and UNTAET approval, further information on the role of the East Timor Defence Force and an indication of the expected duration of any New Zealand involvement. Subject to UN approval, New Zealand Defence Force personnel are available to participate in proposed Australian-led scoping studies to help clarify these issues (MFAT Archives 2000i).*

Inevitably, the scoping study and subsequent Defence donors’ conference in Dili recommended deployment of resources. New Zealand was asked for a small arms training and range control team to work at the main ETDF camp and two officers to help

in the Office of Defence Force Development, which was the nascent East Timor Ministry of Defence.

The bureaucratic politics entered the discussion, however, when the question of funding and paying for this contribution arose. In a note to the Prime Minister on 7 November 2000, Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs Matt Robson noted that UNTAET Transitional Administrator Sergio de Mello had asked him whether New Zealand could consider a cash contribution. Robson noted that ODA could not normally be used for this (according to OECD criteria) and that Defence maintained it had no money. Robson then argued that using ODA would be wrong regardless of the OECD rules as that would reduce the total amount available for New Zealand's other development assistance work. He suggested that overall Defence spending be reprioritised and that NZDF output classes "that are not directly relevant to New Zealand's most pressing security commitments (i.e. those to the North and Northeast of Australia) might be substantially reduced." Robson then argued for a deferral of any decision on funding for the ETDF until two Cabinet papers on called *Projection of Future Defence Funding Levels* and *Foreign Policy: The Disarmament Dimension* were considered (MFAT Archives 2000b). The outcome, however, was not what Robson wanted. No cash was given to the ETDF, whether from ODA or other sources, and there was of course, no major reprioritisation of defence funding to find such cash. Robson's views that East Timor needed the money more than other Defence areas clearly did not carry weight around the Cabinet table.

In April 2002 Robson again suggested that Defence should try to find the money to help the UN and the ETDF by reprioritizing other expenditure. In a memo to Phil Goff and Mark Burton, he referred to a draft Cabinet paper recommending funding for 16 staff officers and Military observers for the UNPKF (after the NZ battalion was withdrawn in November 2002) and a team of eight personnel for the small arms training team. Robson questioned whether this was a cost effective use of new money, and suggested that the future direction of New Zealand policy should see resources prioritised "away from defence and towards non-military expenditure... directly linked to developmental targets agreed on between New Zealand and the new East Timorese government and linked to measurable performance indicators." He concluded, "I would find it difficult to support the proposal to keep 16 NZDF personnel with the UN staff in East Timor beyond

November 2002, unless it could be financed from compensating savings elsewhere within Vote: Defence Force” (MFAT Archives 2002b). As before, Robson’s views did not carry sufficient weight around the Cabinet table and the new funding was approved as recommended by officials.

A third case of bureaucratic politics can be seen in the decision to extend the NZ Police deployment from mid 2001 to the end of 2001. New Zealand Police had been deployed in East Timor since the UNAMET mission in 1999. By early 2000, however the Police deployment became the subject of considerable uncertainty and major policy fluctuations, both at the political and bureaucratic levels. This pattern of uncertainty continued throughout the period of deployment until the end in December 2001. Each renewal of the deployment was agreed following a Cabinet paper—and each paper covered a six month period only. There was no sense that this was a longer term 2–3 year commitment, as the military deployment was viewed. The archives also show that the production of each of these Cabinet papers required careful management of issues of process and timing.

In February 2000, NZ Police advised MFAT that “they were not in a position to release further staff for assignments in East Timor due to staffing and funding constraints”. MFAT conveyed this advice to its posts, although noting in the same cable that NZ Police would be able to offer 1–2 training officers, with NZODA assistance, to train the Samoan UN Police (MFAT Archives 2000g). Nevertheless, Police clearly did not believe that the then current deployment would in fact be the last, as on 25 February 2000, they issued a media release noting that applications are being called from New Zealand Police officers in readiness for future deployments to East Timor. The release notes that “no decision has been made on replacing the current contingent, due to finish their six month deployment in May” but that “we need to be prepared for any eventuality and the nature of the job requires careful selection and a suitable lead-in time for training should we be needed” (New Zealand Police 2000). A subsequent MFAT fax to New York of 29 February refers to this media release and notes that “the third deployment of New Zealand police has yet to be approved by Cabinet and funding issues need to be resolved. Police advise their internal advertising process had to anticipate

Cabinet approval due to the long lead-in time required to select and train candidates” (MFAT Archives 2000k).

On 3 May 2000, a Cabinet paper from Minister of Police was submitted. The MFAT covering memo to the Minister of Foreign Affairs notes that “due to time constraints, the Minister of Police will present this item orally to Cabinet on 8 May and seek leave to have the Cabinet Policy Committee meeting of 10 May empowered to approve the deployment”. In the attached covering note to the paper, Minister of Police George Hawkins notes that “the main complicating factor was the issue of funding for the contingent... regrettably this has impacted on the timing for the paper to go to Cabinet” (MFAT Archives 2000c). Cabinet POL Committee approved the deployment on 10 May 2000.

By the time of the next round of deployments, however, the issue seemed to have swung from Police reluctance to commit staff, to a Police desire to increase its commitment, presumably because there was an expectation that the government would provide new money. On 18 October Cabinet approved a fifth deployment for another six months, with an increased contingent from eight to fifteen. However, an email from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade reporting the outcome of Cabinet Policy Committee’s deliberations on this paper noted that the proposed deployment was approved with reluctance as a *fait accompli* and that the preference would have been to keep the number of police deployed at the existing level (MFAT Archives 2000j).

By January 2001, however, NZ Police had reversed their position again, and appeared reluctant to commit to further deployments. An MFAT cable noted that,

*due to severe and embarrassing wider budget problems, the Police Commissioner has decided not to fund NZ Police overseas deployments from the Police budget in the 2001/2002 financial year... unless the Commissioner and Police Minister have an unexpected change of heart, the current NZ CIVPOL deployment to East Timor will be the last, unless “other sources of funding” (i.e. NZODA) can be found (MFAT Archives 2001l).*

MFAT then asked its posts in New York and Dili for input into whether the costs for a five officer contingent —approximately \$350,000–\$400,000 for a six month deployment—should be sought from the \$2 million East Timor bilateral NZODA

programme, bearing in mind that this would mean less funding for other development activities. Both Dili and New York recommended that CIVPOL not be funded out of NZODA money—the post in Dili argued that CIVPOL were badly organized by the UN and often under-worked—but Dili and New York both recommended keeping two police trainers on the NZODA books (MFAT Archives 2001r). On 8 February MFAT emailed its posts to say that NZ Police were preparing a Cabinet paper to the effect that there would be no new CIVPOL deployments unless new funding were authorized by Cabinet for this purpose. The email noted that the NZ Police had taken an approach both in their Cabinet paper and in the media which indicated that they may be using the current issue to draw attention to wider police budget problems. It referred to the relatively low priority MFAT accorded future NZ CIVPOL deployments to East Timor, and the fact that these could not be supported by NZODA funds (MFAT Archives 2001m). As if to confirm the view taken by the MFAT South East Asia Division, an official from Pacific Division of MFAT added to the email noting that his division had been given the same message from Police about involvement in the International Peace Monitoring team in Solomon Islands—i.e. that it could not continue without NZODA funding (MFAT Archives 2001p).

Given this change of position by Police, MFAT emailed the private secretaries of Goff and Robson, to alert them to this imminent Police cabinet paper and its recommendations (MFAT Archives 2001k). Phil Goff's office replied that Mr Goff had spoken to Police Minister George Hawkins and had said afterwards that the main issue was not the police budget *per se*, but rather the fact that police deployed overseas were not able to be in service in New Zealand. Goff was also conscious of New Zealand's continued involvement in the Solomons and the decision to extend the deployment of armed forces personnel in East Timor for a further year. The private secretary then noted that Mr Goff wanted detailed costs for keeping the CIVPOL contingent for another three months and another six months (MFAT Archives 2001v).

A further draft of the Cabinet paper was produced on 27 February and sent for consultation. This took out all references to an option for extending the deployment; it appears this was at the behest of Police Minister George Hawkins. However this new draft proved controversial as some in the system did not agree with the recommendation



to end the deployment. The Domestic and External Security Secretariat in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, for example, argued that law and order would become more of an issue during and after the East Timor elections (in August 2001), and ending the police deployment would put undue pressure on NZDF to maintain its contribution. DESS believed Cabinet should be given the option of allocating funding for a continued deployment (MFAT Archives 2001a).

The controversy then became one of procedure: could the Minister of Police decide to end the deployment unilaterally? The Police Commissioner prepared a submission seeking this decision on 20 March, asking for formal confirmation of the earlier direction given to him by Minister Hawkins that the deployment would end and seeking direction about whether the letter advising the end of the deployment would come from the Minister of Police or the Commissioner. An internal MFAT memo to Mr Goff's private secretaries, enclosing a copy of this submission, states that the Police Commissioner had been told that his Minister's position was firmly against continuing deployments. This was apparently based on Minister Hawkins' understanding that the Prime Minister did not want a "blue presence" in East Timor, only a "green presence". The MFAT official expressed surprise at this assertion and also commented on the procedural issue, saying "It is our [MFAT's] firm belief that Cabinet should be allowed to consider this question. This would only be consistent with the manner in which the original decision to commit NZ Police to East Timor was taken: by Cabinet" (MFAT Archives 2001s)

In his submission to Minister Hawkins it is clear that the Police Commissioner did not agree with his Minister's direction. He noted UNTAET's strong preference that New Zealand maintain a contingent and commented that "while further contingents will have an impact on our existing resources, this is manageable...After visiting East Timor last week, it is my clear view that NZ Police should maintain a presence there (both training and operational) until at least the forthcoming election" (MFAT Archives 2001w). The New Zealand Representative in Dili commented in an email about the Commissioner's change of mind, saying the Commissioner had been persuaded partly by what the NZ Police were telling him out of their own self-interest, partly by the gratifyingly good reputation our police enjoyed compared with forces from other

countries, and partly by the fact that some CIVPOL were genuinely useful (MFAT Archives 2001n).

MFAT then alerted its Minister, Mr Goff, to the fact that it was proposed that the decision be taken unilaterally by the Police Minister rather than by Cabinet, and that time was marching on “and with it, New Zealand’s margin for manoeuvre”. MFAT noted that if a decision not to deploy another contingent were made, “the period of notice we would be able to provide UNTAET would be indecently short, but because of that, the PM and Ministers could consider they are being put under unacceptable pressure to approve a continuation”. MFAT recommended that Mr Goff impress upon Minister Hawkins the urgent need for a Cabinet paper (MFAT Archives 2001s).

By April, no Police Cabinet paper recommending winding up the deployment was forthcoming, so a continued deployment seemed inevitable. The MFAT Senior Adviser on East Timor Julie MacKenzie noted in an email that she was just about to write a Cabinet paper recommending a further contingent from June 2001 “because it would be indecently short vis-à-vis UNTAET to do anything else now”. This followed from a meeting between Ministers Goff and Hawkins and a decision that the paper would be a joint MFAT/Police one, drafted, in the first instance, by MFAT, and Mackenzie implies that the delay has been orchestrated by Police to their advantage (MFAT Archives 2001o). The paper was in the event submitted as a late paper on 27 April, by Minister Hawkins, to be considered at the Cabinet External Relations Committee meeting on 2 May. In his covering note, Hawkins noted that “the paper is late due to the need for further consultation to take place between officials” (MFAT Archives 2001g). The External Relations Committee approved the deployment on 2 May and this was confirmed by the full Cabinet on 7 May. In conveying the decision to its posts in Dili and New York, MFAT echoed the consistent advice it had received from the Representative in Dili that any new CIVPOL contingent should be deployed strategically, in a national cluster if possible and/or in roles training the new Timorese police force (MFAT Archives 2001i).

While some of this policy confusion can be put down to ongoing uncertainty at the time over the usefulness of the UN’s Civilian Police (CIVPOL) in East Timor, there

were also clearly elements of bureaucratic politics occurring at the intra-state level, in the way Allison's model III suggests is typical. The Police Minister did not want an East Timor deployment, and was reinforced in this position by ambivalence from senior Police and MFAT officials. Minister Hawkins' view was, in the event, was overridden by a change of heart by his Police Commissioner, combined with an opposing view from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Phil Goff. Although the views of officials may have had some influence, the greater political weight of Goff in this matter is evident. As has been quoted earlier, Matt Robson commented that "The powerful ministers were on side, so whatever George Hawkins thought didn't really matter" (Interview with Hon Matt Robson 7 February 2007). Also crucial was the way a deadline forced the issue: without enough time to give due notice to the UN, the drawdown was not politically tenable.

### ***Allison's Model III propositions tested***

The difficulty of using Allison's Model III for an analysis of a case study over a longer period becomes evident from the analysis above. While on one hand, Allison uses a range of variables to explain specific decisions such as personality, bureaucratic or governmental position, conceptions of national interest, other agendas, action channels, deadlines, influence of overseas representatives, or misunderstandings, the model also suggests that governmental action is a "collage" of individual decisions. Over a period of time, then, a full Model III analysis would require all variables to be assessed for all decisions, both large and small, requiring a breakdown of action into such minutiae that drawing broader conclusions becomes impossible. In practice, then, a full model III analysis of this case study would require extensive archival and interview evidence of *all* the background to *all* the deployment decisions for defence, police, diplomatic resources, ODA and for all the other New Zealand agencies over a two year period. Such a full analysis is certainly beyond the scope of this thesis, and potentially would not even be manageable with far more extensive research resources and access.

Given the breadth of analytical evidence and interpretation required for a thorough Model III analysis, the selection of a few key examples to illustrate the model becomes necessary. However this too has its problems. In making such a subjective

selection, the analyst necessarily picks those examples where bureaucratic politics is most evident; for example in final the Police deployment decision, outlined at some length above. This leads back to the circular theory-evidence problem identified earlier, whereby evidence is selected because it fits the theory rather than the other way around. Other examples from the New Zealand engagement in East Timor show a great deal less ‘pulling and hauling’, for example the ODA allocations which were agreed by all bureaucratic participants and approved without Cabinet wrangling.

The weaknesses in the evidential basis for Model III are also apparent: is the police deployment a good example of bureaucratic politics precisely because the decisions *did* go to Cabinet and thus the pulling and hauling is recorded for posterity in the archives? Might there have been similar wrangling over ODA decisions which has gone unrecorded? The research for this case study has sought to correlate archival evidence with interviews of key participants (as it happens, this correlation, such as it is, suggests that the ODA decisions were indeed non-controversial). At the same time, all those interviewed commented on how much they have forgotten of the details of the day-to-day decision making. While participants might find it possible to remember clearly all aspects of a short, crucial foreign policy event with nuclear ramifications such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, this does not appear to have been the case with more mundane, incremental decision making over a two year period, even on a issue which was of the highest foreign policy priority for New Zealand at the time.

With these theoretical and methodological caveats in mind, however, it is still possible to make some provisional assessments of the usefulness of Allison’s Model III propositions for this case study, which is attempted below.

***Individuals’ preferences matter:*** The focus on securing key posts in UNTAET, such as the Chief Military Observer and Police Commissioner underlines the importance of having the right individuals in place in order to secure national interests: this can only be because all concerned realised that in securing any political outcome, whether within the UN’s decision making system or otherwise, individuals do matter. Likewise, within the decision-making system in Wellington, key individuals’ preferences did matter: Matt Robson’s interest in East Timor drove the intervention by the Department of Corrections

as he was their Minister. Phil Goff's historical and ongoing interest and Helen Clark's views also ensured the high profile of the East Timor issue. The view of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Neil Walter did not always coincide with that of his Ministers—in some key areas, such as the opening of the MFAT office, this meant the implementation of decisions was affected. In the example of the final police deployment, individuals' preferences clearly mattered: the view of the Police Minister meant the original decision was to withdraw, the view of the Police Commissioner meant the decision was revisited, and when it came to arbitration, the views of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade in favour of extending the deployment ultimately carried the day.

***Decisions reflect no one individual's intentions or any coordinated, holistic strategy:*** Again, the case study shows the veracity of this proposition: at no point was a decision made to decide the shape and scope and duration of New Zealand's overall intervention. Instead, diplomatic, ODA, Military, Police and other deployments were each decided separately by Cabinet with only informal linkages made between them (e.g. in deciding the scope of the Police deployment, the size of the military deployment is mentioned by several participants as a factor but to different ends). The 2000 Strategy Framework, intended to give overall guidance, was not specific about the size, scope or duration of New Zealand's involvement in East Timor, either with the UN or after independence.

***Decisions reflect both the larger context and the immediate decision at hand: Government action is therefore a 'collage' of smaller decisions:*** Again, this was certainly true in the case study. In the example of the Police deployment, it is clear that decisions about involvement in UNTAET's Civilian Police were made bearing in mind several aspects of the broader context: New Zealand's views on UN reform, the desire to see better use made of police peacekeeping, the view that CIVPOL were not the most effective use of NZ resources in East Timor, and the context of the elections in East Timor in August 2001 and the fear of unrest at that time. From the Police perspective, the original desire to draw down six months earlier reflected the broader context of the Police budget and NZ Police's desire to force the government to address shortfalls by threatening to curtail something that was close to other senior Ministers' hearts. However the specific decision to extend the deployment to the end of 2001 also showed the

importance of short run factors such as the Police Commissioner's visit to East Timor, the timing of Cabinet papers (or the lack of them) and the timing of advice to the UN.

The contention that government action represents a collage of decisions is certainly true for this case study. Military and police deployments were assessed for the most part every six months, so even within the one agency, there was no holistic decision on the total length of the involvement. The same was true for the diplomatic office, which was not established permanently, but rather on a temporary basis with reviews every 18 months. Likewise, decisions were indeed made in silos: ODA decisions were made separately from police and defence decisions. Even in the deployment of uniformed personnel, the links between the size and lengths of the deployments were only ever made in passing and were not the key determinants. Ministers did not always see balance: as noted in the previous chapter, Phil Goff believed the ODA effort was, with hindsight, "stingy".

***Where you stand depends on where you sit:*** This is a difficult proposition to assess across the breadth of the case study. In some instances, it holds true—for example, it can be argued that Matt Robson, the Minister for ODA, wanted more resources given to ODA rather than to military interventions. Phil Goff, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, was keen to see the Police deployment extended so as not to upset the UN by a withdrawal in "indecent haste". On the other hand, both these positions can also be explained by reference to the Ministers' strong personal views on East Timor—could it be, for example, that Robson and Goff would have taken these stances on these decisions regardless of their Ministerial portfolios? All one can do is speculate. The case study shows that the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade Neil Walter did not favour a permanent diplomatic presence in Dili, but it is not clear whether this is a direct result of his role as head of MFAT or his personal views, shaped by years working on the Indonesia relationship and giving official advice on East Timor to various Ministers.

Even if personality and personal viewpoint are set to one side, a role-based or organisational analysis does not provide a reliable prediction of policy stance. On one hand, Walter's role as MFAT's leader meant he was worried about overstretching MFAT human and financial resources. On the other hand, there were good organisational reasons

for opening the diplomatic office in Dili, in that it allowed MFAT to increase its ‘empire’ and status and to better manage the other agencies and its Ministers. (As evidence of this latter proposition, the Department of Corrections’ involvement in East Timor was by comparison seen by several observers, including Minister Matt Robson, as an example of officials getting involved so as to increase their *mana* and to look good to their political masters.)

Moreover, the examples highlighted here show views changing across the time period: Goff became convinced of the need for a longer term diplomatic office, the Police Commissioner decided the NZ Police should stay another six months. This suggests that decisions are not only determined by, or even largely dependant on, the ‘role’ of the participant but by an individual’s personal views and his or her response to the broader context (both within and outside his or her own agency), changing circumstances and new information. Impressions garnered from visits seem to factor highly in this respect. Overall, then, Miles’ Law aspect of Allison’s Model III seems impossible to prove or disprove.

***Leaders’ power is circumscribed:*** It is hard to see this proposition being true across all or even most of the examples from this case study. Indeed, Ministers tended to get what they wanted. When Helen Clark wanted an extended military deployment (after discussion with the Australian PM), it happened, regardless of what her MFAT and Defence civil servants had intended to recommend. When ODA and Corrections Minister Matt Robson wanted a deployment of prison officers, it happened, regardless of the New Zealand Department of Corrections’ inexperience in these matters. When Minister Phil Goff wanted an MFAT office in Dili, it happened, despite the views of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Although in the police deployment case, the Police Minister did not get his preference in terms of an early drawdown in May 2001, his power was not circumscribed by his officials but rather by the views of more senior and powerful Ministers. In this example, one leader’s power was circumscribed, while another leader’s power was reinforced.

***Once made, a decision is supported strongly, no matter how close it was in the beginning:*** This is certainly true of most of the specific decisions examined in this

chapter. While the decision to open an MFAT office may have been finely balanced at first, justifications for it abounded after. The same is true for the extensions of the police and military deployment. The Corrections deployment was justified on the basis on East Timorese and UN need, which glossed over the fact that most (in New Zealand at least) believed it reflected the personal interest of the Corrections Minister Matt Robson.

***Other countries' representatives can be players in the intra-national political game:*** This was certainly true in the case of the military deployment, where Australian views weighed heavily on the New Zealand decision-making process: a direct request from the Australian Prime Minister to the New Zealand Prime Minister seemed to be the key factor in the decision to extend the deployment to a sixth rotation of battalion, for example. However for most other deployments or allocations of resources, the decisions were not penetrated by external individuals, although the broader international context was certainly seen as important. UN views were evaluated, for example, in all the Cabinet papers recommending each deployment/engagement, whether diplomatic, ODA, Military or Police. East Timorese leaders' views were also weighed up. However, while the views of others were assessed, for the most part overseas representatives did not actually participate in the decision-making process—that is, the 'pulling and hauling'.

***Mis-expectations and mis-communications have impact:*** This is intuitively true, although hardly a startling revelation, and examples can be found throughout the case study. For the final Police deployment decision, for example, different views about what the Prime Minister's view might be were cited in favour of different positions. The reliance on oral guidance—e.g. from the Police Minister to the Commissioner—as a basis for policy recommendations increased the confusion within a multi-agency process. Assessments of what the UN would think of a New Zealand withdrawal and what contribution NZ CIVPOL officers were making to the process of nation-building varied according to the position taken.

***There are advantages for players to opt for safety and reticence:*** Examples of this proposition can certainly be found. Civil servants in MFAT made it clear in emails that they did not want to get in the middle of an argument between the Police Commissioner and his Minister about the police budget, nor between the Police Minister



and other Cabinet ministers. Long term civil servants knew the value of making small, safe moves rather than bold strategy; the 2000 Future Directions paper is an example of safety and reticence. This allowed policy space for Ministers to change their minds and for responses to be calibrated to changes in circumstances.

*Forceful action is more likely if framed as a series of incremental moves:* The overall shape and scope of New Zealand's engagement in East Timor shows this to be true. New Zealand opened its Embassy in a series of small, incremental moves: from a Representative Office open for 18 months, to a Consulate General, again expected to stay open 18 months, which was followed by a further extension of 18 months, and finally, the decision for a permanent Embassy. The fourth, fifth and sixth military rotations were all agreed, at the time, to be the last. The Police involvement was extended on a six month basis for each of the five deployments. Although all agreed as incremental moves, overall, the New Zealand involvement was significant: the largest military deployment since the Korean war, for example.

## **Conclusions**

Allison's Model III propositions are something of a mixed bag. While many seem intuitively true, some of the central propositions, such as Miles' law, and the circumscribed power of leaders, seem seldom true for this case study. As noted above, the temptation is for the analysts is to seek out examples of where these propositions do hold true, rather than to assess scientifically whether or not they held true in all or most cases. To do the latter, a more scientific approach to the study of decision is required: all decisions would need to be catalogued, categorized and analysed, with all evidence collated and assessed methodically. In fact, given the incompleteness of archives for recording the 'pulling and hauling' coupled with the incomplete (or even self-serving) memories of key protagonists, it seems unlikely such an approach would ever be achievable. Even if a less rigorous approach is taken, a governmental politics approach is nevertheless still somewhat unmanageable across even a small case study of one small country's foreign policy for one issue over two years.

## Chapter Five : Conclusion:

### ***The usefulness of Allison's Models as decision-making theory***

The first key question for this thesis was to ask, from a theoretical standpoint, how useful is Allison's three model framework for analyzing Government decisions? This study finds that Allison's theories present a paradox: they are both widely accepted and integrated into the international relations lexicon, and at the same time, they have been exposed in a substantial body of academic literature as theoretically and practically flawed. Allison's models are incorporated into almost every standard text on international relations as the basis for understanding government decision on foreign policy. They heralded a whole new school of theory, known as bureaucratic politics. Even a critic of the approach has called the 1971 *Essence of Decision* "an ambitiously intelligent and sophisticated book, ranking among the most important studies in American political science in the 1970s and significantly influencing other fields" (Bernstein 2000). On the other hand, a thorough review of Allison's framework reveals important and unresolved theoretical problems. Welch calls Allison's *Essence* "a seminal formulation [of the bureaucratic politics paradigm] that was fraught with errors, gaps and superfluities" (Welch 1998). While Allison and his colleague Zelikow aspire to address the critical concerns (Allison and Zelikow 1999: viii–ix), this study has found that the 1999 edition does not get to the heart of the theoretical problems with Allison's models. In the following section, the flaws in Allison's work are discussed, which leads into a broader discussion of the usefulness of a bureaucratic politics paradigm.

The starting point for concern is the challenge that Allison sets for himself which is to take the complex world of government decision and approach it with new rigour, that is, to develop a systematised way to analyse decision-making. Indeed, Allison argued in 1971 that "the disgrace of foreign policy studies is the infrequency with which propositions of any generality are tested".<sup>44</sup> He hopes that each of his three conceptual

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<sup>44</sup> This contention was dropped from the 1999 edition.

chapters “state and develop a conceptual model or lens through which analysts can explain, predict and assess situations, especially in the area of foreign affairs, but also across a wide array of governmental actions” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: viii–ix). An early review by Harrison Wagner suggested “it may, in fact, be the most generally persuasive attempt ever made to show the relevance of theorising to the treatment of what are ordinarily thought to be the main problems of the study of international politics” (cited in Bendor and Hammond 1992: 301).

The trouble is that Allison’s theories fail to live up to expectations of theoretical rigour. Their internal logic fails them. The major theoretical concerns in this respect can be clustered into four themes.

The first problem is that the **models are not set out with any degree of clarity**. They are not mutually exclusive. They overlap, are confused and confusing. Terms change. There are too many organising concepts (all numbered) which belies the fact that they are a jumble of different ideas. The second edition hardly helps: it does not say which aspects have been revised and which have been left unrevised. It incorporates new thinking (e.g. bounded rationalism for the rational actor model, “complexity of joint action” for organisations, group think for political decision) into the pre-ambular sections for each model but struggles to add these new complicating elements into the numbered structure of the models themselves.

The second set of concerns is that **the models have too many variables for the analyst to say with any certainty which factors are at work in any given decision**. In Model I, if we assumed a bounded rational framework, (as the 1999 edition does), then not only must we look at the rationale for decisions based on national interest, but also the mindsets, internal logic and world view of the deciders. Under a bounded rational framework, what might be rational to one decider is not necessarily rational to another. For our case study, the question arises as to whether a foreign policy based on humanitarianism and human rights is rational. Is rationality limited only to hard-headed *realpolitik* and a Realist stance?

In the same way as it allows for bounded rationalism, the 1999 edition’s version of the rational actor model moves away from the requirement for one simple rational goal

for each decision—a requirement than suggests leaders are so intently focused on one goal as to be almost monomaniacal—and instead allows multiple goals. The Government could, for example, be seeking to shore up regional security, foster ties with Australia, look like a model UN citizen and help an oppressed people all at the same time.

In these two modifications, both of which are sensible if the model is not to be written off as overly simplistic (as it was by early critics) the unity of the rational actor model is deconstructed, and multiple variables are admitted. However, the model does not help the analyst understand where a policy was rational and where it was not, and which of the multiple factors mattered most in terms of rational or national interest goals of the deciders. These questions are left to the historian who must piece together a picture of events.

In the organisational behaviour model, multiple variables prove equally challenging. Organisational behaviour may be a web of relatively straightforward standard operating procedures, repertoires and routines, but the resulting outcomes are not simple. Which agency was chosen to deliver a certain government outcome and why? Which unit was assigned the job in that agency and why? Which SOP or routine was chosen and why? How did the interaction of consecutive or concurrent routines impact on the results? How does the ‘complexity of joint action’ play out in fact? What about organisational behaviour at the international level as well as the intra-national level? How were the changes in the strategic situation assessed and incorporated? In our case study, using an organisational lens alone leaves these questions unanswered. Allison’s suggestion is that the analyst should study the organisational cultures, SOPs and routines and that this should allow him or her to then predict the decisions flowing from these. However in practice this is inadequate for explaining the multiplicity of variables at work. While in this case study, we can see SOPs and routines operating at a day to day level but we can also see government decision directing organisational behaviour at the strategic level. There is no evidence to suggest that organisational behaviour was systematically subverting the intentions of leaders, and indeed, it can be argued that such behaviour was expected by leaders and factored into their decision making. The case study also shows organisational behaviour at the intra-national level interacting with the complexity of a fast changing situation on the ground in East Timor. It is impossible,

therefore, to ever quantify how much organisational behaviour exhibited influenced government decision in the end.

The multiple variables are evident too in the governmental politics model which includes analysis of personalities, personal view points, the roles of key officials and Ministers, the structure of the decision making process and deadlines and to somehow know instinctively which is more significant at any one time. The case study showed that this was impossible: how is the analyst to separate out role and personality, for example? Would Matt Robson's stance in favour of more aid and less military funding have changed were he not the aid Minister? To what extent do bureaucrats take independent positions in the 'pulling and hauling'? Do they not rather quickly assimilate the positions of their leaders? Can 'players' in the 'game' take two sides simultaneously? What of the variables to which Allison pays scant regard, such as the role of the legislature, the media and the electoral cycle? And what of the multiple variables that make up other state actors' decisions?

The third cluster of theoretical problems with Allison's models is around **the question of evidence**. The challenge is both a rather mundane question of methodology and a more complex challenge of how the theories and evidence interact in Allison's schema.

The methodology for this case study involved examination of MFAT archives, interviews with some of the key protagonists and secondary material on New Zealand's actions in East Timor (which was not extensive). Archives alone include cabinet papers, submissions to Ministers, formal diplomatic cables and less formal email correspondence. They also include Ministerial correspondence with the public, NGOs, Timorese leaders and others, reports of meetings, press clippings and much other material. Interspersed with documentation that allows insight into organisational behaviour and/or governmental politics, is large amounts of more straightforward reporting on the situation on the ground in East Timor, reporting on the then current and future deployments and much detail around the organisation of official visits. More than 50 volumes of MFAT files were examined. More complete research for this case study would have involved

examination also of the archives of the NZDF and Ministry of Defence, NZ Police, Customs, Courts and Corrections and NZODA. The archival search is never complete.

Interviews offer unique insights. Allison's 1971 edition quoted Richard Neustadt "If I were forced to choose between documents on one hand, and late, limited, partial interview on the other, I would be forced to discard the documents" (Allison 1971). Nevertheless, the limitations of interviews as evidentiary material were noticeable in this study. People had forgotten especially the details of 'pulling and hauling' over individual decisions, but even for overall policy directions, memories were hazy. Some of those involved in writing the 2000 Strategy Framework, for example, struggled to recall having done so, and no-one could remember what it actually said. Insights are also affected by hindsight and occasional self-serving revisionism. There is a tendency, looking back, to see more order and cohesion to policy than may have been evident if the interviews had been conducted at the time. Political leaders have a particular interest in suggesting *post facto* cohesion, but civil servants are not immune. Yet, would interviews closer to the period have been any more fruitful? And, with a case study that spans two years, it is not clear when exactly interviews "at the time" would take place? Another key constraint for the interviews was reticence: civil servants were wary of criticising Ministers (who remain their political masters) and likewise, Ministers were reluctant to allow that civil servants had real power in the decision making process, and sought to emphasise the governmental direction for all key decisions.

Even if records such as tape recordings of some key meetings existed (as was the case for Allison's 1999 revised case study of the Cuban missile crisis)—which they do not for this case study—it is still an impractical task for the analyst to record all the political angles to all decisions for all aspects of a complex engagement across a two year case study.

The evidential issue is more fundamental however that the challenge of capturing the range of possible data. The theory-evidence conundrum is that when each model specifies that decisions are taken on a certain basis, then the analyst looks to the evidence to see if this is true. As Bernstein said "the lens had a peculiar quality of fragmenting reality and making observation and knowledge dependent on the chosen theory"

(Bernstein 2000: 6). The analyst then selects evidence according to theory rather than the other way around: evidence that supports the theory immediately ‘jumps out’ and is recorded.

Of course, Allison’s contention would be that the presumption of a rational actor model means that analysts are simply doing this for one model, whereas he is doing it for two others as well. This is fair enough. For this case study, which spans so many decisions over so many agencies over a two year period—this was a problem with all three models. This thesis presents examples of coherent strategy using the rational actor model, of organisational behaviour, SOPs and routines using the organisational behaviour model and of political games and ‘pulling and hauling’ for the governmental politics model. However, just because it is possible to find evidence for each model does not allow a claim of prominence for any of these three models. Of course, “arriving at the theory by way of the evidence and not the other way around” is a challenge for all social science endeavour.<sup>45</sup> The problem for Allison is that he suggests that his models are more scientific than that, yet, in the end, they are simply three different paradigms, each equally subjective, and each open to contention and debate.

The final cluster of theoretical problems is that **Allison’s models lack predictive power**. A Rational Actor Analysis does not permit accurate predictions, partly because, as Allison contends, its chief analytical method is to work backwards: that is, the analyst looks at a decision, then ‘backfills’ the rationale for it. Moreover, if there are several conceptions of the national interest, as there were in this case study (regional security, multilateralism, humanitarianism) then to say that decisions were made based on a coherent, unified rational pursuit of the national interest does not help us predict which version of the national interest will win out. For the organisational behaviour model, the theory suggests organisations follow simple, predictable routines, yet it is evident that organisational behaviour is neither simple nor predictable. For the drawdown of the military component, for example, there were several options put forward by NZDF, all of which would trigger organisational routines and all of which had organisational

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<sup>45</sup> The sentence is attributed to Barbara Tuchman (Tuchman, B. (1965). "History by the Ounce." Harpers Magazine(July 1965): 65, as cited in Paige, G. D. (1968). The Korean Decision : June 24-30, 1950 New York, The Free Press.

advantages and disadvantages. An organisational behavioural model does not help predict which would be chosen.

The plethora of variables incorporated into the governmental politics model makes this the least useful model for prediction of future decisions. Who can say how the cocktail of personality, role and agendas inside and outside the ‘game’ of the current decision will turn out? If it is hard enough to gather evidence for all these factors for a recent historical case study, how much harder would it be to say what they might be in a future, as yet hypothetical, example? When time factors and the realities of incremental decision-making are added into the mix, it becomes even less clear what the overall outcomes or decisions will be. If one admits variables which Allison has not acknowledged such as the power of the legislature (there were no less than three parliamentary delegations to East Timor during our two year case study) the power of the media and the impact of the electoral cycle and political opinion polls on decisions, it becomes even less obvious. Who was to know, for example, that the Alliance party would disintegrate over the issue of sending troops to Afghanistan in 2001, and with this, the Cabinet politics over East Timor issues would change as key individuals such as Matt Robson lost their portfolios?

### ***The usefulness of Allison’s models for this case study***

Having examined the usefulness, in general, of Allison’s models, the second key question for this thesis which is whether Allison’s three model framework for analysing a case study of foreign policy decision making where the state in question is a small Westminster system, and the case study in question is one of a complex, multi-agency engagement, and the case study details involvement in an “integrated mission” for peacekeeping and nation building, where key participants include other countries’ representatives, the United Nations and the local leadership and population, and where the decision making takes place over a period of time, rather than in a specific crisis. In his first edition, Allison argued that his models were applicable outside the USA (Allison 1971: 182–83), while in the second edition, this contention is borne out by illustrative examples from a variety of countries’ foreign policies on a variety of issues and Allison’s



suggested set of “cook book questions” that use the models and can be applied to any foreign policy question (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 389–90).

Nevertheless, the differences between Allison’s USA of the 1960s and New Zealand in the new millennium are plentiful and this does affect the way the models are conceived and formulated. The USA was (and is) a superpower, able to determine the course of world affairs, whereas New Zealand as a small state must necessarily respond to events and decisions elsewhere. The USA is led by a President, who appoints like-minded associates to head the various government departments, and gathers around him friends, advisors and staffers when important decisions of state are in question. New Zealand is governed by a Cabinet, of which the Prime Minister is but one member. The Government Departments are led by long term, politically neutral civil servants. In Wellington, everyone knows each other, and the bureaucratic processes for decision are consensus based, and relatively stable whereas in Washington, heads of agencies may be new to their portfolios and organisations and the tussle of the political game between organisations and their political masters (and the staffers that those masters have brought with them) may be more visible and more significant. Given these differences, some judgements can be made about the usefulness of Allison’s models for this case study.

The rational actor model is useful for explaining decisions, especially at the general level. New Zealand’s decisions, in practice, represent a unified, rational view more than might be the case in the USA where the spectrum of political views and policy propositions is wider. This reflects New Zealand’s small size where all players know each other, and a culture of bipartisan views on foreign policy and, for the most part, a shared understanding of New Zealand’s place in the world. Indeed, the desire to be seen to act as a unified actor is taken on board by the leaders themselves and sometimes guides their decisions. New Zealand’s more unified stance is also a product of the consensus based decision making processes of the Westminster system.

While the ‘unitary’ aspect of the rational actor model might prove valid, the rational actor model’s presumption of cause, effect and consequence is muted when discussing the foreign policy decisions of a smaller player. New Zealand’s relatively minor importance in world affairs and limited resources means the scope for unilateral

action is narrower, even if there were no convergence of views. The options are more matters of nuance and timing. New Zealand simply does not face the stark choices (to invade? or not to invade?) that America faced during the Cuban Missile Crisis or during any number of subsequent US foreign policy decision points.

The case study, confirming the usefulness of a rational actor analysis, shows that New Zealand indeed did take decisions in reasonably unified way, but these decisions were ultimately less influential to the outcome of the foreign policy matter in question i.e. governance of East Timor, than decisions of larger, albeit more divided, governments.

In terms of organisational behaviour, the differences between New Zealand as a small Westminster system and the USA as a super power with a Presidential system are also exposed during the case study. New Zealand organisations, for example, have less scope for rejecting or undermining the decisions of their leaders, as the heads of agencies are long term civil servants. Moreover political masters can and do radically restructure even very stable organisations such as the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, something that seems less common in the USA. In New Zealand it is perhaps harder to make clear distinctions between organisational goals and government goals.

The differences between the USA and New Zealand are clearer nowhere more than in the governmental politics analysis, mostly due to the emphasis on consensus within the government system noted above. The ‘pulling and hauling’ identified in this case study was real—personality and role-based tensions between different Ministers and between the Ministers and their departments—but it was more likely to be found at the fringes, not at the front and centre of decisions. Ironically, one might expect the differences between the two systems to be most obvious when considering the differing roles of the President and Prime Minister, as Kim Nossal highlighted (Nossal 1989). In this case study, however we have detailed two occasions where the Prime Minister was the ultimate decider for the most important decisions: in the extension of the Army battalion for a sixth rotation, and in the extension of the Dili MFAT office. The difference between Clark’s Prime Ministership and the Richard Neustadt’s “President in Sneakers” (as discussed in Allison 1971) is not major.

The next question then, is how do Allison's models stack up when used to analyse a complex, multi-agency integrated intervention for nation building, rather than a simple response to a more direct security crisis? The evidentiary shortcomings of Allison's models are clear, as the integrated (read: complicated) mission involves a plethora of deciders, decisions and timeframes, both at the intra-national level and internationally. It is unmanageable to use the models to cover all aspects of all decisions. One conclusion we can draw for the use of Allison's models, however, is that despite the desire for coherence in mission planning that the UN and others sought,<sup>46</sup> the reality of decision-making processes mitigates against this. Efforts at providing coherence amongst the different actors were made, including the East Timor: Future Direction cabinet paper and Strategy Framework, and the NZODA East Timor strategy, but as outlined in the preceding chapters, these involved mostly finding rationales for pre-existing or already decided programmes. Moreover, government action was mostly within 'silos' of each organisation, with little attention to the distribution of resources between the differing strands of effort. This point was noted by Ministers looking back at the process of decisions. This case study shows a disconnect, perhaps an inevitable one, between the stated reasons for government action, such as humanitarian response, and the consequence shape of government action in practice.

Using an organisational behaviour analysis, the case study shows that the realities of complex, multi-agency coordination in a complex peace support operation generated new routines. These included the new Joint Forces headquarters and regular interagency meetings. The case studies also shows that greater resources on the ground in Dili were helpful in providing more coordination, as although agencies in Wellington were geographically close to one another, often understanding of each others work, plans and problems was limited. Allison's model proves helpful in understanding why this is the case, and why an office in Dili, outside the routines that constrained head offices, was able to be so useful.

Subsequent to the time period of this thesis, more organised routines for interagency coordination have been put in place, including regular Interdepartmental

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<sup>46</sup> For example, in the Brahimi report

Groups on key issues, as is common in Australia, as well as strategic thinking on integrated missions generally. These coordination mechanisms in theory ought to help form an agreed forward direction or at least, help generate coherence amongst routines already underway. There has also been policy work done on New Zealand's future involvement in integrated missions more generally, which takes involvement in Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands and Afghanistan as part of a single issue. The reality for organisations, however, is that such coordination and strategic policy planning takes time to establish and is resource-intensive to service. Such coordination also does not address the more fundamental issues of where resources have been allocated in the first place.

The usefulness of the governmental politics model for understanding decisions within the context of a complex, multi-agency engagement, is that it sheds light on all the other pressures that were on each organisation and each minister at the time. Some examples include the police budgetary and staffing problems which impacted on deployment decisions, the way the relationship with Australia impacted on military deployment decisions, and the way coalition politics and differing constituencies impacted on decisions of the Labour and Alliance ministers. The model also draws attention to decision making processes and timelines. The case study shows how the Cabinet Paper process itself, with all its attendant constraints and time-lags, influenced the outcome of deployment decisions.

Internationally, the plethora of actors and agendas involved in a mission such as UNTAET adds several more layers of complications to the decision making process, and an organisational behaviour and governmental politics analysis sheds light on these aspects also. Not only were there different routines and SOPs within New Zealand, but also within the UN's unwieldy and often unmanageable bureaucracy. While this thesis has not explored UNTAET's decision making in any depth, it is suffice to say that its often anachronistic routines were also clearly the product of organisational and governmental politics processes within the UN. Moreover UNTAET was a new and different entity, set up for a new and difficult task, for which there were few pre-prepared UN routines in place, and no useful models from elsewhere. It was an organisation which was starting everything from scratch. Using an organisational behaviour and governmental politics analysis of UNTAET in some respects answers some of the more strident criticism of the

mission that it lacked vision and coherence that many analysts demand of a rational unity actor.

New Zealand Ministers and officials also needed to interact with their counterparts from a range of other countries, not least Australia, Portugal and the ASEAN states. This interaction occurred in capitals, in Wellington, in New York and in Dili. The complexity of the interaction required for an integrated mission requires much diplomatic work and coordination effort, e.g. the Core Group. The effect, as with interagency coordination in Wellington, was a significant call on resources simply to service the meetings, visits and reporting requirements. A possible result of this for New Zealand's participation in the mission itself, is that so much resource was absorbed in coordination with other contributors and the UN system that there was limited capacity left for deep consultation with local stakeholders. This is certainly a criticism that has been levelled at UNTAET itself, if not at individual contributing nations (although it is true for them too). The need to balance differing levels of enthusiasm for the mission from contributors also meant that timeframes for action were tight, in order to keep the sceptics on board. The organisational behaviour and governmental politics analysis suggests that this was less about deliberate neo-colonialism on the part of the peace support operation, and more reflects constraints of organisational routine, and decision-making politics and timeframes.

The case study in question also occurred over a longer time frame and covers a non crises period compared to Allison's Cuban Missile Crisis. This allows an assessment of whether the models do well in these different circumstances. This study has showed that while Ministers themselves had coherent rationales for the direction of their government's action during the period, and although officials sought to codify this into an overall Strategy Framework, the process of incremental decision-making was indeed significant in determining the actual length, size and scope of the New Zealand involvement. The organisational behaviour and governmental politics models help explain this, and the "collage" of decision that Allison discusses can clearly be seen in the deployment decisions. However, aspects of Allison's models do not hold true over a longer period. The organisations were not an immutably stuck in their ways as Allison suggests they might be. They adapted, for example, and developed radical new routines

to deal with the new circumstances, such as a new aid agency and a Joint Forces Head Quarters. Likewise, over time, political pulling and hauling and personality politicking was significant at points, but overall this occurred only at the margins. For the most part, a general agreement about the national interest and the overall policy direction was shared by both Ministers and officials.

## ***Should Allison's models be used for future studies?***

The last question for this study is whether this theoretical framework could or should be used for future analysis. Allison's models offered different perspectives by which to view government decision, and have allowed insights into the case study that a rational actor analysis alone would lack. As David Welch comments, bureaucratic politics can be a useful *technique* in the study of policy decisions and is also a useful *level of analysis* for attempting to explain state behaviour. The approach has mainly been used to describe actual events in richer detail (Welch 1998). Allison's models also give rise to the contention that there is fertile scope for theory-building at the intra-national level of analysis (Bendor and Hammond 1992). Nevertheless, given the theoretical limitations of Allison's specific models, a productive forward direction for a bureaucratic politics analysis would need to go in one of several directions.

First, it should be possible to construct a simplified set of assumptions and variables for a bureaucratic politics approach that avoids the multiplicity of variables that Allison generates, and test this in a positivist manner. Welch suggests a "menu" covering the key axioms, assumptions and concepts of the bureaucratic approach which is given below in Table 5.1. However, while Welch has succeeded in drawing together the key themes and assumptions of the various proponents of the bureaucratic politics approach, his "menu" still has multiple variables, several of which are not consistent with each other.

Even if the analysts were to select only a subset of these variables, in order to corroborate, support or reject these determinants of decisions, a thorough analysis of all facets of the selected decisions would be needed. Paul A. Anderson for example, has undertaken a content analysis of the near-verbatim records on high level crisis meetings

on Korea, Vietnam and the Cuban Missile Crisis to explore the kinds of alternatives that decision-makers consider. This yields interesting results: Anderson shows that decision-makers consider far more alternatives than a conventional interpretation of bounded rational decision-making processes would suggest, that the great majority of alternatives are not mutually incompatible, and that most alternatives do not result in decisions (Anderson 1987: 306). If such meeting records were available for key New Zealand government decisions, e.g. Cabinet meetings, then surely this would be a fruitful study for New Zealand foreign policy. However even if Anderson's call for 'more data' were heeded, provision of such data would not avoid the constraint of a focus on crisis decision-making, what Anderson calls "the unfortunate tendency to focus on the interesting cases" (Anderson 1987: 305), nor would it address the concern that much 'pulling and hauling' occurs in small rooms, well away from the note-takers and tape recorders.

Table 5.1 : A Menu for a Bureaucratic politics paradigm

	<i>Organizations</i>	<i>Officials</i>
<b>Axioms</b> (These appear to be required and are consistent with one another)	Organizations have “interests” that may be represented as clear preferences, and they seek to promote them  Organizations have varying but measurable capacities to influence policy (“power”)	Officials have “interests” that may be represented as clear preferences, and they seek to promote them  Officials have varying but measurable capacities to influence policy (“power”)
<b>Assumptions</b> (these are among the available set; not all are consistent with one another)	Organizations’ preferences are a function of material interests (e.g. size, role, budget share)  Organizations’ preferences and behavior are a function of organizational culture.  Organizations may be treated as unitary “rational” actors  Organizational behaviour is constrained and enabled by scripts or routines  Organizational influence is a function of issue salience  Organizational influence is a function of organizational cohesiveness  Organizational influence is a function of mobilizeable resources	Officials bring policy preferences to their positions  Officials preferences are not a function of their organizational affiliation or role  Officials may be treated as “rational” actors  Officials’ behaviour is a function of cognitive, motivational or personality factors  Officials’ capacity to influence policy are a strict function of their organizational affiliation and position  Officials’ capacity to influence policy are a function of idiosyncratic bargaining skills and will
<b>Concepts</b> (These are among the available set: not all appear to be necessary)	Interests Preferences Role Power, influence or capacity Resources Culture Coherence Issue Salience Script/routines	Interests Preferences Role Power, influence, or capacity Resources Issue salience Beliefs Emotional needs Personality Bargaining skill Will

Source: Welch 1998



Another possible theoretical direction is to move towards a constructivist approach, that is, to examine the social and historical construction of the various positions at the intra-national level (Weldes 1998). This approach would take forward Allison's ideas of understanding, for example, the missions, mandates and cultures of organisations, and ask how they came to be that way, and who profits from that. Such an approach would delve deeper into the language used to describe policy positions, and would look at how interests in the bureaucratic process are "produced, reproduced and transformed through the discursive practices of actors" and how interests "*emerge* out of the representations that define actors and the situations they face" (Weldes 1998: 218). A constructivist approach might look at how knowledge is formed and used a power in any policy decision, and might examine more closely "the discursive construction of a particular situation as an event and of a particular practice as a choice" (Weldes 1998: 223). This process seems to offer a rather open-ended possibilities for academic questioning, and to help show how decisions are framed (and the power plays behind that process) but it is hard to see how de-constructing the constructs of organisations, players, events and choices, however theoretically valid, would actual help, in a practical way, policy makers faced with the business of managing a foreign policy.

An alternative theoretical direction for bureaucratic politics could be to examine more closely the social psychology of group decision-making processes in governmental politics. Allison and Zelikow touch on some of the newer work in this area in the 1999 edition of *Essence of Decision* and Kaarbo and Gruenfeld suggest this could be taken further, to look at the cognitive and motivational factors within bureaucratic politics, the ways increased inter-group conflict promotes intra-group cohesion, the factors that promote conformity and compliance dynamics within groups and the factor which promote conflict and how the multiple roles that bureaucrats play affects bargaining within and between agencies (Kaarbo and Gruenfeld 1998). As with constructivist approach, this seems fertile ground for further research and could lead to greater understanding of the complexity of decision-making processes. Awareness of group dynamics could help those who actually participate in group processes, and would be certainly be useful for those designing the processes, to help them achieve their desired outcome. Nevertheless, a challenge would be to find a 'test tube' case in which these

multiple variables could be separated out and tested, independent of other mitigating factors, or external context. For the political scientist, moreover, it is hard to see how such a study would generate accurate predictions on complex decision-making, given the multiple variables.

It becomes relevant to ask, at this juncture, whether bureaucratic politics in general, and Allison's models in particular could be adapted to make them theoretically relevant for examination of future case studies of New Zealand foreign policy decision-making. Could Allison's models be used to analyse and predict decisions for current and future peace support operations, such as, say, the RASMI operation in Solomon Island, the East Timor operation from 2006, or operations in Afghanistan or even conceivably Iraq? This thesis' conclusion is that Allison's models could be productive, but their shortcomings would need to be borne in mind.

On the positive side, Allison's deconstruction of the assumption of the unitary rational actor as the basis for governmental decision is for the most part helpful. While decisions *can* be made on the basis of a sensible identification and pursuit of the national interest, and such a basis can have widespread support within a country, it is wrong to assume that decisions are automatically made thus. This is particularly true when dealing with counterparts that are not homogeneous, robust and well-established nation states but rather are fragile new political systems, such as any of the countries mentioned above. It is normal to assert that, for example, that Solomon Islands invited in, and continues to welcome the RAMSI mission. Nevertheless, in the years between 2006 and 2007, the Solomon Islands Government actively worked to undermine RAMSI. Exploring in depth the decision-making process behind the invitation to Australia and others to assist in 2003 would lead any analyst to conclude that the supposedly unitary position is rather more fraught with debate than it first appears, and that such debate needs to be taken into account in RAMSI's work.

At a more general level, requiring a fragile state with a myriad of players and agendas, ongoing historical grievances and underdeveloped coordination systems to behave as a unitary rational actor is done with alarming frequency. It is not uncommon to hear politicians and academics describe what East Timor should do about the violence

there that has occurred there since 2006, or what Iraq needs to do to ensure its own security, as if each state was a unitary actor. In some cases, policy is organised around setting milestones for the fragile state to meet. The assumptions in the analytical approach quickly become absorbed into suggested policy options, and in the case of such fractured polities, are frankly misguided and dangerous.

The organisational behaviour model also has practical policy applications, as it can shed light on influential organizational factors that otherwise might be left unexplored. This can allow policy makers to fix ongoing problems. An example of this was Brigadier Nigel Alwin-Forster's critique of US policy in Iraq. His article explored a range of cultural factors within the US military, from policy to training to recruitment and retention to management of bad news, which all led to military and political failures in Iraq. Without the identification of these factors, and the explicit links between them and poor decisions, the US military would not be able to manage any kind of reform which would allow it to better cope with future counter-insurgency operations. Organisational constraints within UNTAET such as poor mission planning, lack of stand-by personnel, poor linguistic and cultural understanding and a tendency to apply lesson learned from other missions, no matter how different the context, have also been the subject of academic criticism as we saw in Chapter 2. Many of these organisational criticisms, and others, have been highlighted in the Brahimi report as areas for reform of UN peacekeeping and some have been acted upon. For RAMSI, a comprehensive study of organisational factors was undertaken by the RAND Corporation, which was contracted by the US Joint Forces Command, in order to see if the US could learn lessons from peace support missions in the South Pacific. Those interviewed for that study were adamant that organisational factors were central to RAMSI's early and ongoing success in re-establishing law and order in Solomon Islands (Glenn 2007).

A governmental politics analysis is useful for policy makers, because it reminds them that bureaucratic politics are an ever-present factor in governmental decision—this is, as Paul T'Hart and Uriel Rosenthal suggest, “the last taboo”. Public officials need to factor into their planning sufficient policy space to allow for competition and conflict within and between government agencies. If such space is not provided, and the inevitable bureaucratic politics is simply “to be eradicated by organisational reform or

smoothed over by increased coordination”, then there is a good chance that investment in long term planning will be wasted as strategies are agreed then forgotten in the pulling and hauling of ongoing policy making (‘T’Hart and Rosenthal 1998).

On the negative side, using Allison’s models to analyse complex security problems and to predict how different participating governments will behave is fraught, and predicting outcomes is not a realistic prospect. As noted above, the frameworks have inconsistencies in their internal logic, it is hard to distinguish between the models as they overlap and there are too many variables to accurately identify which factors are crucial in determining outcomes. And, as ever, evidence remains a major problem. Who could possibly gather evidence, for example, to suggest how different factions in Afghanistan will behave in future, how they will interact amongst themselves and with international players, against the backdrop of an uncertain future local and global context? Such participants are not archiving their correspondence and recording their meetings for academic researchers to study, and even if they did, who could possibly predict how the interactions would result in specific decisions? The same complexity applies to East Timor in 2008, where the historical factions, bureaucratic and electoral politics within the local elite interact with the differing foreign policies of key stakeholders such as Australia, Portugal and ASEAN, and the complex debates with and within the UN. Even if the analyst was to limit himself or herself to more easily studied and predictable organisations and actors, as I have done in this case study by focused squarely on the New Zealand system, the multiplicity of variables involved in Allison’s models make predictions impossible.

Moreover, the specific propositions do not always (or indeed often) hold true: or in any case, an argument can be made for and against each proposition based on the same evidence. Describing a case study more fully does not necessarily help us address problems, and indeed, an argument can be made that describing the complexities of the intra-national decision making process, including the vagaries of context, timing and politics, actually makes each case seem more unique, and generalisations harder to reach. The more we know of the complexities, the fewer sensible “lessons learned” we can draw from one case study to apply to another.

The final limitation of using Allison's approach for a study of New Zealand foreign policy is that organisational and bureaucratic politics do not necessarily determine foreign policy decision in a small state. This case study shows that for a small country dealing with the complexities of overseas events, organisational agendas and political wrangling at home are often less relevant than the impact of decisions made elsewhere. This is true for other examples also. For RAMSI, New Zealand's contribution was requested and shaped by Australia, and our military and police forces remain under the command of Australians. RAMSI's planning is done in Canberra (albeit with a New Zealand representative at the meetings) rather than hammered out around civil service or Cabinet tables in Wellington. In Afghanistan, New Zealand has even less influence over the NATO-led management of security and long term development, a factor noted in recent government statements. While New Zealand, as a small state, can make decisions at the margins, the major decisions are made elsewhere.

So, where does this leave the analysis? We have concluded that Allison's models are useful but flawed. While they do not represent the entirety of the field of bureaucratic politics by any means, they point to a means of analysis that forces examination of the assumptions underpinning much international relations writing analysis and requires that the analytical net be cast more widely. They thus help scholars present a more nuanced and complex representation of past actions. But the complexity of the real world means Allison's positivist intention to be able to predict future behaviour is not borne out in practice.

## ***Implications for policy-makers***

While Allison's models may not be perfect political theory, this study has shown that by directing the analyst to examine the intra-national influences on foreign policy and the processes involving in governmental decision, they provide important and useful insights into the policy making process. Drawing from the case study of this thesis, therefore, it is possible to identify some factors which policy makers should take into account as they approach key issues for decision.

***States don't always behave like rational actors, and shouldn't be expected to.***

The more fragile and disintegrated a state is, the less it can be expected to fit into a model

based on unified, coherent state-level identification and pursuit of national interest. Policy makers should explore the organisational and political currents that flow beneath state behaviour.

***Conflict within and between governmental actors and organisations is to be expected.*** Officials and ministers who hope to “eradicate” bureaucratic politics or “resolve” it through more coordination are naïve. While consensus based approaches are useful for preserving long term relationships, some conflict within the governance system does not necessarily lead to worse decisions.

***Longer term ‘whole of government’ strategy is most useful if it gives specific guidance on what actions must be taken, when and by whom.*** Strategies that do not give specifics run the risk of having the governmental action decided more by organisational agendas and bureaucratic politics than by leaders’ vision. In practice, this means that bureaucratic and organisational politics and conflict needs to play out at the time of drafting of the strategy, rather than leaving this aside in the hope that it might go away in the future. It might be useful, for example, to be honest with Cabinet about ongoing policy differences between agencies, rather than shrink from the spectre of offering “conflicting advice”. By the same token, strategies for New Zealand government action need to take into account the ways in which other countries’ positions and actions are influenced by the intra-national governmental politics factors, and ways in which these might change over time.

***Individuals matter.*** It is important that the people involved in making decisions are aware of the way their own experience impacts on the advice they give, and also on the way they receive advice. Prejudice about Ministers from officials and about officials from Ministers is can undermine effective decision. It is also important that lists be kept of key people who have worked on an issue, so that if this issue resurfaces, institutional memory will not be lost, and routines can be adapted rather than reinvented. In-depth knowledge of the politics of the fragile state in question, including its personalities and historical animosities and friendships will be crucial in designing effective peace support interventions. Individuals also matter within a mission, and efforts to secure key senior posts within an integrated mission are usually worthwhile, as it is only with having the

right person in the right place that a country like New Zealand can hope to influence outcomes.

***Organisational routines matter.*** It is not possible to devote new funding to a problem without institutional capacity to manage that new funding. Routines, processes, SOPs are crucial, and can turn an idea into an implemented result. Organisations which have effective routines are more likely to get funding, and to get results. Organisations without effective established routines in a particular area will struggle, at least at the outset. Ministers need to make trade-offs between getting a job done quickly and effectively using pre-existing routines, and allowing time for organisations to create new, perhaps better-targeted routines. Military operations are a good example of the former, whereas good development partnerships tend more to the latter group of routines.

***Budgets matter.*** It is important to look to the bottom line. If New Zealand spent \$56 million on military peacekeeping in East Timor from 2000–2002 and around \$10 million in ODA over the same period (and much of the police, corrections and customs expenditure is included within that figure), then indicates where New Zealand placed its priorities, even if organisational factors may have determined this expenditure rather than overall strategy. If a government wishes to address humanitarian concerns and long term development, it needs, put crudely, to ‘put its money where its mouth is’. Likewise, if officials are developing a long term strategy, this needs to include specific budget provisions, whether new money, or reallocation of money. Strategies without budgets will not greatly influence policy outcomes.

***Decision making processes matter.*** Departments which are good at preparing and writing Cabinet papers are more likely to get the outcomes that they want than those which lack policy capacity. Departments that get decisions endorsed by Ministers in writing are more likely to succeed than those which work on oral guidance. Departments that can clearly set out costs and timeframes are more likely to get what they want than those where the true costs of implementation remain opaque. Departments that have a longer term strategy (preferably endorsed by their Ministers) but which seek to further it incrementally are more likely to get what they want through the Cabinet system than Departments that seek large upfront commitments of money or political capital.

***Organisational agendas matter.*** Policy makers and analysts who operate as if the major organisational policy debates (e.g. over defence or aid) were separate from the decisions on East Timor from 2000–2002 will miss key elements of explanation and context. In this case study, decisions on the operation were made with an eye to justifying and validating the broader policy directions. Likewise, it is important to understand that ‘what we have determines what we send’. In this way, the analyst can explain why New Zealand sent many more military peacekeepers, and for longer, than New Zealand sent police peacekeepers. An analysis which explains deployment by reference only to the situation on the ground will miss out other key explanations such as existing force structure, and the readiness to deploy. A good set of policy options put to Ministers will be honest about these factors. A poor set of recommendations will seek to select elements from the situation on the ground that purport to justify the organisational response.

***Coherence and coordination comes at a cost.*** The interactive complexity than Allison and others describe is real. Addressing this requires a shared vision and strategy, regular coordination meetings, and continued adjustments to organisational routines. This takes time, human resource and money. The danger is that if extra resource is not devoted to this, actual implementation of government decision will suffer. Moreover, continued deep consultation with stakeholders from partner countries can be left out in the drive for better internal coherence within a complex peacekeeping mission. The immediate results delivered from resources devoted to internal coherence are not always visible: partner countries and electoral constituencies might rightly question where the money is going. Moreover, when there are multiple goals and programmes in play at once, it is hard to measure success of any one aspect of the intervention. “Integrated” becomes a by-word for “complicated and unwieldy”. None of this is sufficient argument against seeking whole of government coherence; rather, it is a recognition that this does not come without cost.

***If officials can link foreign policy recommendations to broader government goals and mandates, they will have more chance of success.*** It does not matter if an intervention can be justified on the basis of several goals, such as regional security, humanitarianism and multilateralism, provided that at least some of its justification is linked to pre-existing broader policy and political goals of the government. Most actions



are justifiable in several different ways, and that these different justifications will be used, or emphasised for different audiences. An analysis conscious of the nuances of governmental politics would see this as a strength.

*It is not possible to eliminate the political game through better coordination at officials level.* The reality of the New Zealand political landscape under the Mixed member proportional system is of coalition governments. Different parties in a coalition will be responding to different political constituencies. Even within the major parties, there are different constituencies that need to be kept happy. Moreover, politicians are concerned with political acceptability of decisions, which can often be judged on short term criteria and can depend on media presentation of issues and responses. Officials who created elaborate, well thought out and well coordinated plans independent of the political process should not be surprised if these plans are nevertheless shelved, diverted or only partially implemented due to the ‘pulling and hauling’ at the political level.

Given these suggestions for policy makers, there is scope to suggest some areas for future research and the application of a governmental or bureaucratic politics model to studies of recent or future conflict is indeed a useful avenue to explore. Leading on from this thesis, a useful future study might involve comparing this case study with New Zealand’s subsequent interventions in Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and East Timor again. What did Ministers and officials learn from their earlier experience? How were routines adapted? What difference did personal long standing interest in the East Timor issue from Ministers (and their sense of obligation) play in comparison to other interventions? How much does the relative complexity of the UN administration impact on New Zealand decision, compared, say, to the RAMSI mission which has fewer participants and more streamlined decision-making structures. What about NATO in Afghanistan? Did personal experience in East Timor in 2000–2002 shape officials and Ministers views on what should be done there in 2006 and onwards? Another potentially fruitful comparison might be in comparing the decision-making processes of New Zealand with another country, for example, Australia. What influence did differences in the decision-making processes have in determining the differences in policy?

## ***Conclusions***

Overall then, this study has shown that Allison's models for explaining foreign policy decision hold a central place in the mainstream of international relations thinking about decision-making. The study has highlighted the critical acclaim these models received, their general usefulness in shedding light on otherwise unexamined aspects of decision-making, and their salience for policy makers hoping to better understand processes behind governmental decision. While recognising the usefulness of Allison's models, this study has also sought to canvass in some depth the literature around them and to recognise some of the valid criticisms that have been made of them. Where Allison's models fall short is in their internal logic and in their predictive power. While a thorough theoretical analysis of Allison's models does suggest they are somewhat flawed, a practical test of them in the case of New Zealand foreign policy decision has shown that they can indeed be a helpful framework for analysis, and the US-centric nature of the original formulation does not in fact stand in the way of their usefulness in the New Zealand context. Allison's models have allowed a better and more thorough explanation of New Zealand government decision making over a two year period, for a complex peace support mission than would have been possible had we assumed a 'default setting' of historical description using a rational actor model. There is certainly scope for using Allison's models to better understand government decision, and to thereby better analyse and understand government action. For policy makers, awareness of how the processes used to decide necessarily impact on outcomes is an important and ongoing lesson. Allison's hope that his models could have wide application has indeed proved mostly, if not entirely true.

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